

21

健速
Takehaya



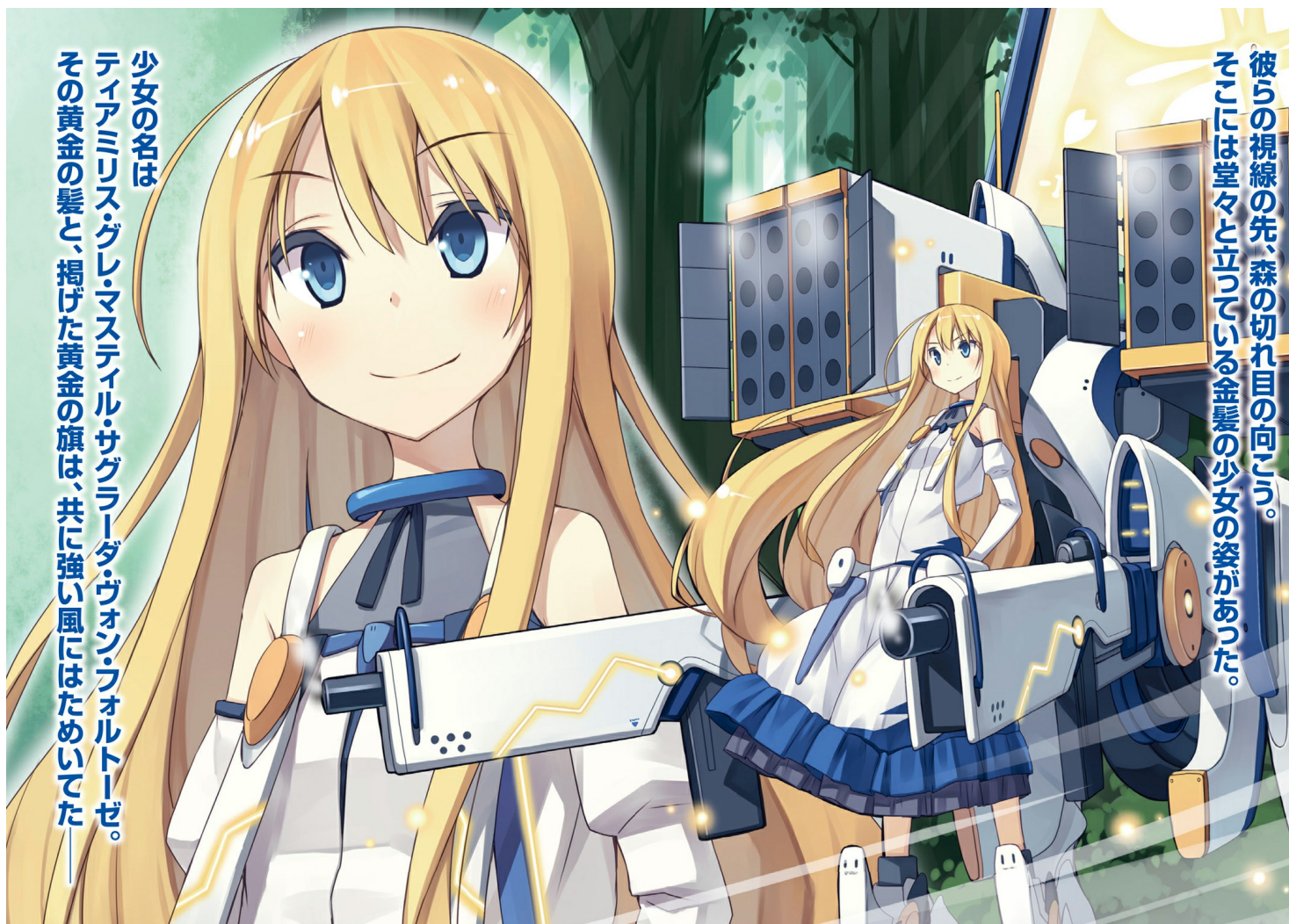
Novel Illustrations



六畳間の侵略者!? 21
～黄金の姫と青き騎士～

彼らの視線の先、森の切れ目の向こう。
そこには堂々と立っている金髪の少女の姿があった。

少女の名は
ティアミス・グレ・マスティル・サグラ・ダ・ヴォン・フォルトゼ。
その黄金の髪と、掲げた黄金の旗は、共に強い風にはためいてた――



「ふふ、従者はあなたですわ。
いつになったら理解するんですの、この原始人め……ふふふつ」

「……クラン。

お前は前みたいに、俺の従者をやっている。
……お前が必要だ」





Corona Convention

NEW!

2010/11/20



Article 24

Those who have ratified the Corona Convention are strictly forbidden from re-entering the atmosphere without the use of a spaceship. However, taking the situation into consideration and no other alternatives are found, it might be allowed on exception if the majority of those who have ratified the Corona Convention agree.

Article 24 Postscript

I won't consider it! I definitely won't do it again!!

Quickening

Part 1

Tuesday, October 26

A media equivalent of Earth's television exists on Forthorthe as well. However it was no longer airing programs in accordance to a time schedule anymore. Moreover, the broadcasting equipment itself didn't resemble that of a TV. Their equivalent device was like an enlarged version of the bracelets that Theia and Clan used in order to make it easier to see. Those devices were connected to a galactic-scale information network and were always kept up to date with the latest information and shows. The only difference between a household version and a personal version was the display size.

Forthorthe's TV broadcasts, if we were to call it that for convenience sake, had a lot of information and programs related to royalty. The most information was of course about empress Elfaria. These past months, she had been sick and was recuperating, which enlivened the broadcasts.

However, all of this information regarding Elfaria was fake. She wasn't sick, but placed under house arrest by the military, and her daughter, Theia, had saved her and taken her to Earth. During that time, the truth was never broadcast and instead insisted that Elfaria was sick and refusing all interviews. The military had seized control of the media and parliament and been continuously giving out false information. However on one day, the media began reporting, all together, that Elfaria wasn't actually sick. The new reports were regarding Elfaria's major crimes and that she had fled to a planet Forthorthe had no diplomatic relations with.

Moreover, it was added that the truth hadn't been broadcasted up until now because the crimes were regarding the current empress. Because it was in regards to the highest authority in the country, the media had restrained itself, as her crimes couldn't be carelessly announced until there was unmistakable proof, which all of the news companies agreed on.

“The current empress, Her Majesty, Elfaria Dana Forthorthe is suspected of having embezzled an enormous amount of public funds. She is also suspected of having murdered the journalist Mr. Curial Maduldin, who attempted to expose this. According to the prosecution, the evidence has been gathered and if this goes to trial, the chances of a guilty verdict are high. And using that as their basis, the parliament decided to announce this information. The expected development from here on out is the removal of Her Majesty, Elfaria's crown and authority, before she is arrested. However, Her Majesty is currently believed to have escaped to a planet on the edge of known space with which Forthorthe have no diplomatic relations with, and Princess Theiamillis is suspected to—”

These reports came as a huge blow to the Elfaria faction. It was clear that they would be made out to as a rebel force from here on out. However, they were prided Forthorthians with a long line of tradition and history. They knew how to confront adversity such as this. They would stand tall and proud by the empress and princess until the very end. The legend of princess Alaia and the Blue Knight was still alive within their minds.

Part 2

The first move the Elfaria faction did was to let Elfaria and Theia know of the situation. Nothing could start before they did. In order for them to take swift actions, they needed to keep the two up to date on the changes in their country.

“The problem is how we send this information to the planet where Her Majesty is”

A man with a beard around his mouth, Lord Pardomshiha, was staring at the reports being broadcast with his arms crossed, and racking his brain. In this situation where the empress is absent, Lord Pardomshiha was serving as the leader of the Elfaria faction. He had to lead the Elfaria faction until the empress returned and overcome this difficult situation.

The Elfaria faction has Mastir vassals and friendly parliament members and citizens at its center, with bands of knights joining and forming the faction. Currently there were two band of knights that had joined, the Pardomshiha and the Wenranka. Both are old band of knights, serving the Mastir family for over 2,000 years and they rushed to the aid of the Mastir family without hesitation, even this incident. They were the epitome of loyal subjects.

“Normally we would just communicate using hyperspace, but our imperial army, no, the coup d'etat army, would likely detect it”

Facing Lord Pardomshiha and discussing matters was the leader of the other band of knights, Lord Wenranka. The title of Triumphant Knight that the Wenranka family possessed held the same rank as the Pardomshiha's Guardian Knight. However, being young at below 40, he allowed Lord Pardomshiha to serve as the commander out of respect. Bravery wasn't Wenranka's only tradition, but they also emphasized justice and reason.

“Then that would make stuffing the information into a pod and shooting it towards Earth from the edge of the solar system our best choice”

“The forces in charge of that mission would risk death. So please leave this to my band of knights”

“Are you sure?”

“If Pardomshiha is the shield of the royal family, the Wenranka is the spear. Allow us to distinguish ourselves first”

“Indeed, you are right”

They needed to send the information to Earth, but there were circumstances that prevented them. If they used hyperspace communication to send a message over 10 million light-years, the source of the broadcast could be detected by others. If they did that, it would be like telling the enemy the location of their base. The information needed to be sent some other way.

So the method they chose was to pack the information into a pod used for communications and launch it towards Earth. The pod could be called a small spaceship. However, on top of being small it also couldn't load people on it, so it was much faster than a normal spaceship. Of course, the accuracy became a problem due to its speed, but that could be overcome by launching multiple pods. Though it needed to be sent from the edge of the solar system, it was a much safer means of communication than using hyperspace.

I just hope we can get this information to Ruth...

Lord Pardomshiha arranged the information as he thought of his daughter in a far away country. Elfaria and Theia weren't the only ones on Earth, but Lord Pardomshiha's daughter, Ruth was there as well. That's why the information reaching them or not would greatly affect his daughter's fate. The top priority was just Elfaria and Theia, but it was only natural for a parent to think of his child.

“I'm counting on you, Wenranka”

That's why Lord Pardomshiha's voice instinctively turned more stiff. A complex feeling that he couldn't say out loud lied behind it.

“Leave it to me, we will succeed without fail”

However, Lord Wenranka was a parent as well. He properly understood what

Lord Pardomshiha was unable to say. So he accepted his role with firm words and a determined smile.

Fate's Guidance

Part 1

Friday, November 5

Clan's personal spaceship, the Hazy Moon, was officially not at Earth. Because of that, it was the best place to hide the people from the Elfaria faction that Theia had brought with her when escaping from Forthorthe. If things turned for the worse, they could be taken to the Schweiger family. The rivalry between Mastir and Schweiger would work out in their favor.

“Princess Clariosa, there are no words to express our gratitude for being so considerate towards us”

That's why the Elfaria faction people couldn't help but feel confused and they extended their gratitude at any opportunity. Though that troubled Clan herself.

“... There's no need to be so concerned with that. You are citizens of Forthorthe. That's enough of a reason for me”

Clan was unfamiliar with dealing with others as she spent most of her time holed up in a lab. So she felt troubled as others thanked her straight out like this. She also felt embarrassed at her own immaturity as she realized that once she became empress this would be a daily occurrence.

“But don't you have your own position as a member of the Schweiger family to consider... ?”

“Of course. I ultimately intend to prove that I am superior to Theiamillis-san and sit down on the throne myself”

That said, it had already been almost a year since she and Koutarou travelled to past Forthorthe. From that point she began coming into contact with others more often, and as of late she's started getting better at handling situations like this. She would stay immature forever.

“Then—”

“However, that will only be done from taking her on up front and coming out victorious. Collaborating with the ploy to trap the empress would only bring shame to my family name. Are you telling me to do something as disgraceful as that?”

”N-No, I wouldn't dare”

”Then this is fine. This is the kind of Forthorthe that Her Majesty, Alaia, sought to protect”

“Your Highness...”

The thing that had caused Clan to grow the most was having seen the legendary princess Alaia up close. By objectively looking at Alaia and comparing her to herself, Clan realized just how immature she really was. Having realized how a true princess should be, Clan gradually started changing. She wanted to get even one step closer to Alaia, if possible, she wanted to go beyond her. That will was what worked to create the current Clan.

“Princess Clan!”

“Show us the Blue Knight again!”

After silencing the adults with a smile consisting of her strength and kindness, the children came running up to her. They were after the recorded footage of Koutarou. They loved seeing the knight in blue armor perform outstandingly, and would pester Clan whenever they could.

“Okay, okay, just wait a moment... then farewell”

“Y-Yes, farewell Your Highness”

”Hurry up! Princess Clan!”

”C-Could you not push me. The Blue Knight won't run away”

“No! I'm pushing!”

”Kyaa!?”

Clan said goodbye to the adults as she was pushed and pulled by the children, and taken away in moments. Those few moments were enough to convey what kind of relationship Clan had to the children. These series of events with Clan came as a big surprise to the Elfaria faction people.

“... She's left”

“Yeah. But still... princess Clan is just as suited as a princess as princess Theia”

“It seems our judgment was clouded”

”The real person is completely different from her reputation. Who was it that called her a sly she-devil”

”This just means that you can't rely on rumors”

”You've got that right... with princess Clan and princess Theia, Forthorthe will be alright”

They were surprised, but it wasn't out of negative emotions. If anything, they welcomed Clan being splendid royalty. She also became a great symbol of hope to those chased out of their home country.

Part 2

The children of course wanted to see the Blue Knight fight against something big. Their favorite was the decisive battle against Alunaya. They had heard of the battle between the Blue Knight and the Fire Dragon Emperor, Alunaya, being told as a fairy tale. Since this battle was like a reproduction of that, they could watch the battle on repeat forever.

These children probably don't think that Koutarou is the Blue Knight in its true meaning... but they might vaguely be able to sense it...

Being begged by the children, Clan showed footage that wasn't required to be kept secret, or that would pose any problems to show. But as they watched together, it seemed like the children would confuse Koutarou and the Blue Knight. This time was the same as their eyes sparkled as they watched Koutarou fight.

"Clan-sama, Clan-sama, this person is the Blue Knight right?"

"W-Who knows, I don't really know the details"

"Stupid, Clan-sama can't just say it's the Blue Knight. It's a state secret"

"I see, cool, a state secret!"

Whenever Koutarou did something, the children would fret and come ask Clan if he was the real Blue Knight. Clan knew the answer to that question but she couldn't tell because of her position. The best she could do was smile wryly and dodge the question.

"He flew!!"

"Cool!! The state secret is flying!!"

"He's glowing!!"

"The state secret is glowing!!"

“... Somehow... I feel like I've made a terrible mistake”

Since the Elfaria faction people had seen the battle against the forces lead by DKI, Clan was showing them footage of the same level of secrecy as that. However, by now, she started believing that might have been a mistake. Clan's feelings were actually correct. While she probably hadn't realized, the perception that the Blue Knight and Koutarou were the same person started to grow stronger amongst the Elfaria faction people on Earth.

“Clan, are you busy?”

As Clan was racking her brain, Theia unexpectedly appeared in the conference room she was using to show the recorded footage. Behind her was Kiriha. The two had come to meet Clan.

“I-I'm not! Welcome, Theiamillis-san”

“It's Theia-sama!”

“You're right!”

“Clan-sama is amazing! She's friends with Theia-sama!”

“... Uhm, I'm a princess too...”

At first she was embarrassed from having been found by Theia as she was together with the children, but she had instinctively forgotten that because of what they said.

Part 3

Theia and Kiriha had come to visit the Hazy Moon because they wanted to ask Clan the scientist questions with no one else around. So they left the conference room the children were in and moved to the conference room next to it.

“So what do you want to know?”

Sitting down face to face with Theia, Clan started out casually.

“U... Uhm...”

However in contrast, Theia had been showing a complex expression since she sat down, and even after being urged by Clan she couldn't start right away.

“Theia-dono, would you like me to do it?”

Noticing Theia like that, Kiriha offered her a helping hand. She had left the talking to Theia while she made tea. The tea had been brought from Earth, so it would taste better if Kiriha made it rather than leaving it to machines. However, as Theia seemed to be struggling to speak, Kiriha offered a helping hand.

“No, this is regarding myself. I will speak”

“I see”

Hearing Theia's answer, Kiriha returned to making the tea. She poured hot water into the teapot and kept the tea leaves in it for a while.

“Is it something serious?”

Seeing the two like that, Clan started getting worried. She had been expected some light banter, but she felt puzzled over their serious atmosphere.

“No, that's not it. To put it more accurately, my worries might be alleviated. So just think of it as idle talk”

“Then that's fine...”

"It's just that I'm a novice. Fufufu, how pathetic..."

Theia lightly dropped her delicate shoulders as she smiled wryly with a face full of various complex emotions. Seeing that, Clan felt like regardless of the circumstances, this was of great importance to Theia. So she righted her posture and looked at Theia, waiting for her to start speaking. After that, some time passed and Theia began speaking her mind after some tea had been put down on the table.

"... Tell me, Clan. Is it possible to conceive children between Forthorthians and Earthlings?"

It was a worry that had been on Theia's mind for almost a year. There was no longer any doubt that Theia loved Koutarou. However, if she were to wish for him to love her, a sturdy wall called species stood in the way. Theia was from Forthorthe, Koutarou was from Earth. Regardless of how similar they might look, it was impossible for creatures from different planets to have children. That had always bothered Theia. Even if she were to wed Koutarou and return to Forthorthe with him, he would be alone without family. Theia and Ruth would work together to try and keep him from loneliness, but she still couldn't help but worry. It was a worry she could never dismiss because she loved him.

That was when it was revealed that the people of the magical kingdom of Folsaria and the People of the Earth were descendants of Forthorthe. And that pointed Theia to a certain important fact. The fact that people from Forthorthe and Earth had come together and had children. Both countries have had people that married to Japanese and had children.

That's why Theia had come to ask Clan if she could do the same. If she were to marry Koutarou, could they have children. To Theia, it was something more important than the sun rising tomorrow.

"So it's about that. No wonder you look so serious"

Theia's question helped resolve Clan's own question. If this was her reason, it was only natural to be nervous. If their positions had been reversed, Clan surely would have felt the same unease.

"Please Clan, tell me. I'm begging you!"

"Ah, uhm, Theiamillis-san, please raise your head! You don't have to do that for me to tell you!"

"Clan! I owe you!"

Theia raised her head and lunged forward to grab a hold of Clan's hand. A faint trace of tears could be seen in her eyes. This was a truly important matter to her.

"No thank you. I don't want you to be indebted to me over something so important. It's not fair after all"

Clan was satisfied from having just seen Theia's tears. As she was always so strong, it was rare to see her tears. This was also a question of her pride as a princess, and she also had circumstances of not wanting to suppress her own romantic feelings. Due to the various reasons and circumstances, Clan always wanted to be equal with Theia. That's why she had no intentions of requesting anything else after seeing her tears.

"Then I'll start from my conclusion"

Taking Theia's feelings into consideration, Clan decided to start with the conclusion. Theia instinctively held her breath as Clan spoke.

"It is possible to have children between Forthorthians and Earthlings"

"Are you sure!?"

Hearing those words, Theia suddenly slammed her hands into the table and stood up straight. This also surprised Kiriha, who was holding a tray nearby, and the normally calm woman's eyes were wide open.

"It can't be... but then Earth and Forthorthie are..."

"That's right, Kii. I have already confirmed that the genetic code is close enough to allow for breeding"

From there, Clan began explaining how she reached her conclusion.

The first time Clan sensed that something was off was when Koutarou had been hurt in the past Forthorthie. It was a minor wound during their travels, and she had used her first aid kit without really thinking about it. The kit worked

perfectly, and the wound had vanished the next day. But when she really thought about it, that was strange. First aid kits from Forthorthe were made to match people of Forthorthe. The diagnostic devices and medicine were not made with Earthlings in mind. Yet it had worked properly and treated Koutarou. In other words, his body structure was similar to that of a Forthorthian. However, because the wound was light, Clan couldn't rule out that it was just a coincidence. It wouldn't be strange for a first aid kit to work on an alien creature in regards to minor injuries.

However, shortly after that a problem had arisen that couldn't be cleared up as a coincidence. That was when Dextro attacked with a virus. When both Clan and Koutarou were infected, they barely showed any symptoms. So Clan figured that she could simply analyze their genetics and use that as treatment. As a result, she managed to keep the casualties at a minimum, and found a certain fact. The fact that Koutarou and Forthorthians had almost the same genetic code.

The fact that Koutarou's genetics could be used for gene therapy meant that his genetic code was compatible with Forthorthe creatures. If not, then the treatment wouldn't have worked at all.

However this was strange, or rather, impossible. The lives of two different creatures that had naturally evolved on two different planets were transmitting genetic codes using the exact same method. Life was created through DNA composing genes, and the genes altering cells to create the body. Being from two different planets, the environment should have an effect on that and a difference should appear. For example, if the phosphates used to create DNA was insufficient on a planet, arsenate might be used instead. Yet, there was no such differences. That made the gene treatment possible. An example of this would be that computers developed in two completely different places for some reason having compatible operating systems.

After a more detailed analysis of Koutarou's gene code, Clan couldn't find any genetic difference between Earthlings and Forthorthians. In other words, they were practically the same species. One could indirectly understand how abnormal this was from how many times Clan had redone the analysis. In total she had redone it 22 times. It wasn't until she had done it that many times that she was able to accept it.

Of course, Clan knew that if she were to point that out, people would question her sanity. The probability of that happening were just so low. However, as a scientist, after removing the impossibilities, she had to accept the truth regardless of how strange it was.

“... Unless I'm some fool who would fail my analysis 22 times, I can't help but say that Forthorthians and Earthlings are the same species”

Clan finished her explanation. When she spoke her conclusion, she had a very serious expression. This was something Theia had begged her to talk about, but it still wouldn't be strange for her to get laughed at for saying.

“If that is the case, then that gives rise to one major question”

Fortunately, Kiriha wasn't laughing. Since this was a serious discussion around satisfying Theia's and Clan's desires, she couldn't possibly laugh. However, that aside, there was something that was on her mind.

“If the people of Earth and Forthorthe are the same species, the same species must have purposefully been placed on these two planets”

“That would be the case. The chances of the same species appearing on two distant planets at the same time is something so low that it wouldn't happen even if you repeated the history of the universe several times over”

Just having two intellectual life forms encounter within a universe so large was difficult to begin with. They would need to prosper during the same short period of time that their species existed. Just shifting them by a few ten thousand years would be enough to keep them from moving. That's why Forthorthe was more often likely to encounter the ruins of aliens, than living aliens themselves.

On top of that, they needed to be the same species. Undergoing the same evolution, carrying the same genetics, making breeding possible. Could a coincidence like that truly be possible? Both of them rejected that. While they couldn't declare that there was an absolute 0% chance, the probability was astronomically low. But since it had actually happened, it was far more likely that someone had purposefully placed the species on two planets. They had stumbled upon a great mystery of the universe.

“You can leave that difficult topic for later!”

Theia slammed her hands into the table again, interrupting the two. The topic had greatly changed from what Theia wanted to know. She only wanted to learn one thing.

“Clan, say it out loud one more time! Can Ruth and I bear Koutarou's child!? Can we give him a family!?”

Could they have a normal future of an ordinary man and woman. Compared to that, the difference in status or special fate were but tiny problems. Theia only wanted to know if she could truly become Koutarou's family.

“It's possible”

Clan clearly nodded. Because of questionable ethics, Clan hadn't experimented on whether or not fertilization was possible or not. However, according to computer simulations, the chances of success should be similar to that between two Forthorthians. While it wasn't completely certain, the chances were far higher than sterile Forthorthe couples.

“Of course, there's still a while left until you're of marriageable age”

“... I see, so it's possible... Ruth and I, can have Koutarou's children... we can give him a family...”

Having heard Clan's response, all of the tension in Theia's body snapped like the strings of a puppet as she slumped down on the floor. She put her hands on the floor and repeated what Clan had taught her with a dim expression. As this had been something she had been worrying about for so long, she felt immeasurable shock.

“... Now all he has to do is wish for it... then we...”

As time passed, the shock passed, and Clan's words gradually sank in.

“... Uuhh... ugu...”

Tears filled Theia's eyes. They quickly turned into large tears and streamed down her cheeks, reaching her chin before dropping onto the floor. One after another, the tears fell to the floor and created a spotted pattern.

“... I'm glad, uuhhh, I'm really... uuuhh... uuaaa...”

"As your genes are so similar, even if some minor problems occur, I will do something about it. So be at peace"

"Now you've lost your handicap, Theia-dono"

Clan and Kiriha gently stared at Theia who had begun to cry. Tears were starting to form in their eyes as well. They could painfully understand the feelings of knowing you had a future with the person you loved.

"... Uuuuh, higu, uaaaahh waaaahhh!!"

Eventually Theia began bawling. However, Clan and Kiriha did nothing to stop it, and simply quietly looked on. There was nothing for them to do as they knew these were tears of joy.

Room 106's Portrait

Part 1

Saturday, November 6

Considering the current situation, marriage was out of the question. There was also the other party's feelings that needed to be taken into consideration. Forcing her feelings on him was not what she wanted. Moreover, even if they were to marry, children would be far longer down the line. Theia was well aware of that. However, knowing it was possible, she couldn't help but be conscious about it. That was true even now as Theia stood in front of the bookstore, gazing over the magazines that were just released today.

“... A special feature on raising children, huh...”

Normally they were magazines that she had no interest in. However, the special feature this time around grasped a hold of Theia's attention and wouldn't let go. Her wishes of wanting to take a little peek of the future that had just been opened up before her was shaking her to the core. On the cover was a couple pushing a stroller. Theia's desires were to the point where she imagined herself and her husband in place of the couple.

“... But... for me to buy something like this...”

However, she was aware that buying magazine was quite unlike her. She was always active and aggressive. So would it really be right for her to this far too calm magazine? Theia's common sense and pride worked together to prevent her from picking up the magazine. However, she couldn't ignore it. As a result, she simply stood there, staring at the magazine.

“Is something the matter, Your Highness?”

That was when Ruth, who had finished her shopping, returned to her side. Ruth was actually the one who had business with this store as she had come to pick up a recipe book. Theia was simply tagging along.

“I-It's nothing, nothing at all”

Theia blushed a little as she quickly looked away. She didn't want Ruth to know what she was doing.

“...? Is that so?”

Feeling that this reaction was odd, Ruth traced along the direction Theia had been looking, and spotted the magazine in question.

So Her Highness was interested in this...

Ruth was convinced of it right away. She had also heard that Forthorthians and Earthlings could have children. That's why she could easily imagine how Theia must be feeling, as she felt the same way. And being childhood friends, she understood Theia's inner conflict, and what she herself needed to do.

“I'm sorry Your Highness. I forgot to buy something. Please wait here for just a moment longer”

”O-Okay”

Ruth flashed a small smile and picked up a couple of the magazines at the storefront and headed towards the register. Among the magazines was the one that Theia was interested in. Ruth would buy the magazine for Theia's sake, and borrow it to her, but just having one would make it harder for Theia to accept her offer. But by making it one magazine out of several, she could use the excuse of being bored and just reading it because it was there. This was the consideration of a long-time childhood friend.

Returning to room 106, Ruth put down the bag of books bought from the bookstore on the tea table, after which she left the inner room and began on housework such as cleaning the bath, preparing dinner, washing and the likes. Normally that could all be done by machine, but Ruth wanted to do it with her own hands. The reason for that was that housework was her hobby, and at the

same time it was the path to her future.

“.... Hmm...”

Theia was observing Ruth from the inner room. There was something she wanted to do, but she didn't want to be seen by Ruth.

“Hmm hm♪ Hm hmm♪”

That was when Theia saw Ruth enter the bathroom. Since she was holding a sponge and detergent it was clear that she would be cleaning. She wouldn't be coming out for a while.

“... Alright”

After confirming that the door to the bathroom was closed, Theia quickly crawled up to the tea table, pulling out all of the contents of the bag on top of it.

“... Here it is...”

Theia picked up the magazine with the special feature on child raising. It was the same one she had been staring at before.

“... In this is mine a-and, uhm... future...”

Theia suppressed her beating heart as she flipped through the pages. She was so nervous her hands were trembling. In the beginning pages was a publication with a picture of a young wife smiling at her baby sleeping in its crib.

“Ah...”

The moment she saw that photo, Theia was completely swept away by the special feature. As she flipped through the pages, she carefully stared at each and every one of the photos. Her future was being made clearer through those photos. That's why she didn't even glance at any of the articles. All she was looking at were the happy families, and her future with her husband that she saw reflected in the photos.

A-A wedding... there will be a proper wedding before children... after swearing our love before the goddess, we will... and then me, him, Ruth and Mother will live together, play around and raise our children with love... and then...

Theia saw herself and her husband in place of the couples in the photos. The

family and friends were also replaced with Ruth, Elfaria and the girls of room 106. To Theia, the photos in the magazine were her ideal future.

“... Housework, the husband doing housework... h-how much should he do.... but, housework is Ruth's hobby... aahh, what should I do!?”

Theia was full of excitement as she simulated scenarios as she stared at the photos. The normally strong princess was nowhere to be seen. Right now, she was just a girl, yearning for her normal future. And Ruth was watching over Theia with a smile.

“Fufufu, oh Your Highness...”

Theia was simply so absorbed in the photos that she hadn't notice how much time had passed, and that Ruth had already finished cleaning the bathroom. But Ruth didn't mind. She had bought the magazine just for this. That's why she was planning on leaving Theia like that for a while longer.



“I'm home”

Theia had the magazine spread open and was running a simulation in her mind as she stared at a photo of a couple by the front door. So when Theia heard Koutarou's 'I'm home' she naturally accepted it.

“Welcome back, darli—”

As she reflexively replied, she hurriedly blocked her own mouth. She barely noticed that she was saying that in reality.

“Fuwaaaah!?”

Theia finally returned to her senses and realized what she was doing and what she was about to do, and she furiously blushed.

And knowing that at this rate, Koutarou would find out, she hurriedly shut the magazine and pushed her hand into the pile of books. The next moment, Koutarou entered the inner room.

“Huh? It's just you, Theia?”

“...”

When he entered the room, Koutarou saw Theia sitting stiff as a board by the tea table all on her own, with several books in front of her. Upon closer inspection, her face was red.

“What's wrong, Theia? Did something happen?”

Confused by that, Koutarou sat down next to her and looked at her face. Just as he did, Theia began struggling and moving.

“I-It's nothing, nothing at all!! Nothing's happened!”

“Really?”

Koutarou looked at the tea table. There were several books piled on top of one another, and the cover of the magazine Theia had been looking at was peeking through as well. Koutarou naturally pulled that out, and Theia raised her voice even further.

“I was, uhm, well, ah”

Her voice was loud but she couldn't find any words. Her mind blanked out as

she wanted to find an escape somehow, and only meaningless words left her mouth.

“Is something up? Tell me, what happened?”

Theia was clearly acting strange, causing Koutarou to worry as he looked at her with a serious expression. He was aware that she was important to him, so he couldn't leave it be.

“W-Wah, ah, uhm, aauuuu...”

However, Theia was of course unable to answer. She felt impatient, not being able to say what she wanted to say, and her confused head was running in circles. Making sounds was the best she could do.

“Actually, Koutarou”

The one to save Theia, was Kiriha who had entered the room after Koutarou. She sat down in her usual place by the tea table and began speaking in Theia's place.

“Theia's bra has gone up in size. Try to be more considerate”

As she said that, Kiriha pointed at a different fashion magazine.

“Ah...”

This caused Koutarou to misunderstand that Theia was looking at new bras in a fashion magazine. He smiled wryly and apologized to Theia.

“Ah... I'm sorry, Theia”

“... Eh? A-Ah... you don't have to worry... o-over something like this...”

Thanks to Kiriha skillfully making Koutarou misunderstand, Theia successfully escaped any inquisitive questions. That was when Ruth, who also just entered the room, bowed her head to Kiriha from a position where Koutarou couldn't see. Ruth had actually been the one to request Kiriha to help Theia out. Since she had been with Theia at Clan's place, she knew of Theia's circumstances. That's why she gladly agreed to help.

Part 2

Having somehow been able to conceal her motive, Theia began acting a little strange. Whenever she was with Koutarou, she couldn't help but think of the contents of the magazine. Ruth and Kiriha helped cover up for her, but at this rate, it was only a matter of time before Koutarou noticed Theia's behavior. The reason why that didn't happen was thanks to the appearance of a person who rarely visited room 106.

“Reios-sama, please play with me. I'm bored”

That person was Theia's mother, Elfaria. The current empress of the Holy Forthorthe Galactic Empire. However, she sat down next to him and spiritlessly leaned on him. It was a pitiable appearance, and she didn't look like an empress nor a mother.

“Hey, Elle, you're in front of your daughter, so be more proper. Sit up straight!”

“You're speaking like a caretaker again...”

“If you don't shape up I'll call you Her Majesty”

Because of Elfaria's behavior, Koutarou didn't notice that something was up with Theia. Despite her sloppy behavior, she was unexpectedly useful for her daughter.

“Then what will you call me if I do act proper?”

“... I'll hit you”

“To begin with, call me Elle-chama—”

Thud.

“Uhh, you're as violent as always, even towards an empress...”

Having angered Koutarou, a lump formed on Elfaria's forehead, which she

pressed her hands against with tears in her eyes. She looked very similar to Yurika, but there was actually a big difference between them.

“... So, what did you actually come here for?”

“Actually, it looks like the citizens that came with me are reaching their mental limit again. So I was hoping I could lend the strength of Reios-sama and the others like last time”

Elfaria returned to a serious expression and sat up straight in an instant, as she asked Koutarou for his help. There was no longer any traces of her pitiable appearance from a few seconds ago, instead she was as dignified as one would expect from the empress. The girls who were looking on instinctively held their breaths from the extreme change.

“Come on... Why can't you just say that from the start?”

However, Koutarou didn't seem to be affected by her sudden change in the slightest. In fact, he was looking at her with a dumbfounded expression. Because he knew the true Elfaria, he wasn't shaken by a change on the surface.

“Fufufu, doing it in this order, you end up saying 'What, you do have a proper reason after all, I will help'”

“You don't have to do that for me to—”

“Do anything to help the citizens that Alaia-sama protected?”

“... Yeah”

“I want you to say that you'll do it for the sake of the citizens of your beloved Elle-chama and Theia-chan”

Koutarou could sometimes see glimpses of Alaia in the royalties of Forthorthe. Unlike the girls, the already adult Elfaria had noticed that, and she found it somewhat irritating. That's why she attempted to attract Koutarou's attention with her eccentric conduct, and at the same time, buying time for her daughter.

“Tah”

Thud.

“Ow!? What are you doing, I was in the middle of a nice story!!”

"You just tried to sneak in Elle-chama in there, didn't you?"

"That's right, I am Elle-chama!"

"You bastard, what am I going to do with you..."

Apart from Theia, Koutarou was most likely the only one else Elfaria could expose her true self to. The impactful meeting and farewell from 20 years ago were still fresh in her mind. He was the ultimate hero and her first love. The absolute ally of the royal family. The citizens weren't the only ones mentally fatigued from being apart from their home country, Elfaria was as well. She treated herself by seeing Koutarou, but her obstinacy as an adult prevented her from letting others notice.

Part 3

Fortunately, Elfaria's request was accepted immediately and Koutarou and the others decided on letting the Elfaria faction people free on Earth the next holiday. The human heart was frail. Especially so when far away from one's home, so some time to rest was necessary.

“... Reios-sama, I want to enter this beautifying bath!”

“The hot springs huh. That looks good”

The Elfaria faction people would be sent sightseeing where they pleased on sightseeing buses. But sadly, due to security reasons, Elfaria couldn't join them on the sightseeing buses. Instead she tagged along with Koutarou and the others on a personal sightseeing trip. And they were all currently discussing on the destination.

“I have to stay beautiful for the sake of the citizens and Theia!”

A little while ago, Elfaria found a magazine on hot springs in the pile of books. As she flipped through the pages, she spotted the photo of an interesting hot spring and ever since she'd been in a hot springs mood.

“Wouldn't you be happier that way too, Reios-sama!?”

“Hey, Theia. Elle is saying something stupid again. You say something to her too”

“...”

“Theia?”

“Eh, ah, woah!? S-Sorry, I wasn't listening...”

“Are you really okay? You're acting strange today”

While Elfaria's behavior had kept him from noticing most of the day, he too began noticing that Theia was acting strange. He was worried as she lacked her

usual power, and he stared straight at her face.

“I-I'm fine, nothing is going on!”

“You...”

Theia's face was red and she would space out. From Koutarou's point of view, he figured that she might have a cold, and he pressed his hand against her forehead.

“... don't seem to have a fever”

“Hawah!?”

This surprised Theia. This wasn't limited to just Theia and Koutarou, measuring a fever like this in room 106 was a common occurrence, and Koutarou had done this to Theia several times before. However, for some reason Koutarou's hand felt strangely hot today. She couldn't help but feel conscious about him touching her.

Theia loved Koutarou, but since he was an alien, some part of her had given up. That served as a brake on her love and her recognition of the other party being a man. However, that brake broke the other day. And having looked at the magazine just a while ago, her heart's engine was going at full power, and after running for a while, it wouldn't stop. That was Theia's current psychological condition.

“It's nothing, it's nothing, it's nothing at all!!”

“Uwaaah, what now, all of a sudden!?”

Being swung around by her own condition, Theia had no idea what to do and decided to begin with attacking Koutarou. She grabbed a hold of the hand on her forehead and performed a joint lock like she was used to it. Being cornered, all she could think of was doing something she was good at. However, that choice wasn't bad, as she was at least able to shut Koutarou up for the time being.

“Owowow, what is really— that hurts!!”

“I don't know, I don't care, I don't know!!”

“I give up! I give up!”

“Die, just dieeee!!”

However, Theia was the one being cornered. Because she put Koutarou in a joint lock, their bodies were close, and she became even more conscious of him. As a result, her heart ended up beating even faster, to the point where she felt like it was going to burst.

“Fufu, Satomi-kun and Theia-san are full of energy today too”

”Ruth-san, what happened to Theia-chan?”

To Harumi it only looked like the two were getting along, but Shizuka's eyes opened wide when she saw Theia. In response, Ruth smiled wryly and approached Shizuka.

“Shizuka-sama”

”What what?”

Ruth beckoned her over, and whispered into Shizuka's ear.

“... Actually, we found out that Earthlings and Forthorthians can have children. Because that means she can have a normal relationship and marriage, Her Highness doesn't know what to do...”

”Really!? Isn't that great, you're happy too right, Ruth-san!?”

Having learned of the circumstances, Shizuka's expression brightened up. Ruth nodded at her with a big smile.

“Yes! She had completely given up for a moment... so I believe her heart has been racing ever since she found out!”

Theia wasn't the only one who could now have a normal relationship and marriage, so could Ruth. While she doesn't know what will actually happen, just knowing that its possible was enough to change her frame of mind. Ruth felt very optimistic.

“I just always thought it was possible, so I was surprised that it might not have been...”

Harumi smiled with the two. She had already been told about this. Since she was ignorant when it came to science, so she figured because they looked the

same, they could have children. That's why she didn't understand what she was being told in the beginning, but now she was celebrating with them.

“As for me, I'm somewhat perplexed to learn that I am a descendant of aliens”

”Ah, me too”

Kiriha and Maki had the opposite reaction of Theia and Ruth.

Kiriha knew that Maxfern and his alchemists brought their culture and technology to the ancestors of the People of the Earth, but as they were aliens she didn't expect that she was a direct descendant of them. But with Clan's testimony, the chances of that being true was high.

Maki's case was somewhat more simple, one day she just suddenly found out that she was an alien. Though there was some Earth blood in her, there was still some shock from knowing she was the descendant of aliens.

“What about me...”

”You don't need any more strange settings”

”Sanae-chan, what do you mean with settings!?”

”Since Yurika was born with magical power, it's possible that she might be a descendant of Forthorthe...”

In Clan's eyes, there was a strong chance that Yurika was also a descendant of Forthorthe. Yurika was born in an ordinary Japanese family, but she had a vast amount of magical power compared to a normal Earthling. Rather than assuming that was a coincidence, there was a higher chance that she had the blood of Grevanas' magicians.

“Then that just leaves me, Koutarou, Harumi and Shizuka as Earthlings?”

Kiriha, Maki, Yurika, Clan, Theia, Ruth and Elfaria were either pure Forthorthian or were like to have their blood running in their veins.

“In other words... the direction you took your cosplaying was wrong. Everyone would have accepted it if you were cosplaying an alien”

”I'm not sure what I think about you putting it like that!!”

“... Wait up Sanae, that might necessarily be the case”

Kiriha interrupted the two's discussion. There was something about what Sanae had said that caught "Eh!? Was a magical girl the correct choice!?"

"They're both correct!!"

"That's not it—"

"Are you saying I shouldn't have been a magical girl!?"

"— I mean that it's possible that almost everyone in this region has Forthorthian blood"

There were four Earthlings in this room. That's what Sanae had clearly stated, but Kiriha questioned if that really was the case.

Maxfern and the others reached the ancient Kitsushouharukaze. They might have been few in numbers, but the city at the time should have been just as small. As the years passed, they increased their descendants. Because of that it was possible that almost everyone had some Forthorthian blood in them. Amongst them, Yurika just happened to awaken to her abilities. That's why it was still possible that Sanae and the others were also descendants of Forthorthe.

"That might be true. When I was in Darkness Rainbow, we were mostly concentrated around this town"

Darkness Rainbow operated throughout all of Earth, but for some reason, they were particularly active in the area around Kitsushouharukaze city. Compared to other regions, there were more children born with magical power. Because of that, recruitment of members, gathering of sacrifices and securing disciples was mostly done in the area.

"So in other words... Reios-sama was already of a lineage fitting enough to become a knight of Forthorthe"

That was where Elfaria's eyes began sparkling. Maxfern and Grevanas were certainly criminals, but Forthorthe wasn't the kind of country that would blame the descendants for the actions of their ancestors. In fact, Maxfern's niece, Lidith and Grevanas' subordinate, Caris, were not blamed for the crimes of the former two. Instead, Alaia promoted them to important positions as her loyal vassals. As a result, only the fact that the descendants of those that came to the

ancient Kitsushouharukaze city had the blood of Forthorthians would be noted. That meant that there were survivors with Forthorthian blood still on Earth, and one of those became the Blue Knight who saved Alaia.



“Which means♪ That we have to transfer the territory confiscated from the Maxfern family over to Reios-sama♪ Ah, how troublesome, how truly troublesome♪”

From the moment of Alaia's declaration, the Blue Knight's rights couldn't be restrained by laws. As the Maxfern family's territory had been confiscated, if Koutarou had even the slightest trace of Maxfern's blood, he had the right to inherit that territory.

“Ohohohoho, to think he would not only have a knight's title, but ties to the nobles♪ This will have to be officially restored sooner or later♪ The paperwork will be such a pain♪ Really, what should I do♪ Ohohohoho♪”

“... I'm not really troubled though”

“Instead, it sounds like more established facts are being added to keep Satomikun from running away...”

Though Elfaria was going on about how troubled she was, her expression was far from it. If anything, Sanae and Harumi who were looking at her were the ones who seemed troubled. And the other girls felt more or less the same way.

“Why are you always that mean to me!! Why can't you just be more honest!!”

“What are you talking about!! What are you saying I've done!?”

“I don't care!!”

“Owowowowow!! Kuh, I-I have no idea what you're talking about!!”

“Kyaa!? W-What are you!?”

Koutarou was still caught in Theia's joint lock. However, if he were to use spiritual energy or magical power, getting out was easy. The reason he wasn't doing that was because Koutarou thought it was fun, and at the same time he loved Theia.

“Bertorion, if you leave Elfaria-san be, something terrible will happen”

“But, where is it I wonder, I think it's a good thing to have a house to live in”

“Yurika, are you planning on living there too?”

“Will room 106 return to being vacant I wonder...”

“Your Majesty Elfaria... it might be better not to be so stubborn... there's Master's feelings to think about too...”

”Ahh, how troublesome, I am so troubled♪”

Considering his relationship to Theia and the invader girls, the chances of Koutarou escaping Elfaria's clutches were extremely low.

Part 4

Elfaria would be joining for today's dinner, and she was warmly received. Ruth was in charge of the cooking as always, but Theia offered to join in as well. Kiriha let Theia take over cooking for her and was instead drinking tea.

“... To think the day would come where I would eat my daughter's homemade dish...”

“Theia-chan's cooking is somewhat rough, but she is pretty good. She even got a pretty good evaluation during the cook-off”

“Shizuka-san, you are the one who taught Theia cooking, aren't you. Thank you very much”

“So did Kiriha-san and Sakuraba-senpai, it's not like it was just me”

“I am grateful to all of you. Really, thank you very much”

Just moments before, she had been acting naïve girl, but when it came to Theia, Elfaria's feelings as a mother came first, and she acted like an adult woman. It showed everyone how good the two got along.

“... You could just act like this all the time. So why are you always like that?”

“If I'm not like that, there's someone who will keep a certain distance to me”

“I don't understand what you're thinking about”

“I'm sure you don't. If you did, there would be no reason to act like that”

“Geez, when it comes to you...”

Koutarou had no complaints about how Elfaria was acting right now. If possible he wanted her to always be like that, but at the same time he would feel lonely not being able to see the normal Elfaria. That was most likely Elfaria's goal, but since she had no evil intentions, all Koutarou could do was fall for her ploy.

“It's for my daughter's sake”

"I wonder"

"I'm not lying. I will do anything to have Reios-sama call me mama"

"As if I'd call you that!"

"Do you hate Theia?"

"That's not what I meant! Even if I were to marry Theia, I definitely won't call you mama!"

"Ah, could this be your rebellious stage!?"

"No!"

However, in the end, Elfaria's serious expression didn't last for long. By the time Theia and Ruth were finished preparing dinner and returned to the inner room, Elfaria was back to her usual self.

"... If you don't cut it out I'll punch that beautiful face of yours!"

"Beautiful? You think so!?"

"You bastard, I say one thing and you take it in another way..."

"I think it's better to just give up, Bertorion. You can't win with words against a hardened politician"

"Kuh, I'll make you pay one day"

"Does that mean you'll always stay by Theia's side!?"

"... She's a genius at faultfinding..."

Koutarou was completely argued down by Elfaria. The more he spoke the more he felt like he was sinking down a marsh. Moreover, she wasn't showing him any malice, so he couldn't resolve it through force either. Koutarou was completely helpless.

"... Ruth, it's been awhile since Mother has shown others that face"

"It's probably because she trusts Master just like you, Your Highness"

"... Um, you're probably right..."

For the same reason as Theia, there were few people Elfaria could show her true colors to. The legendary hero she had met when she was young was one of

those few. Theia secretly felt that she should live her life alongside Koutarou for her mother's sake as well.

Part 5

Once dinner began, Elfaria turned her attention towards Theia and let Koutarou out of her clutches. With that, the atmosphere in room 106 returned to normal.

“Koutarou-san, here”

”Thank you, Sanae-san”

Koutarou received a saucer with dishes on it from Sanae-san sitting next to him. As of late, she would often be handing out the dishes like this. The reason for that was because Sanae-chan was clinging onto Koutarou's back.

“Alright Koutarou, eat up! I'm ready!”

”If you're going to go through the trouble of handing it over to me, you should just eat it yourself”

“I prefer you to eat it first. I wouldn't want there to be any green pepper in it”

”Aha, ahahaha, I'm sorry...”

With Sanae-chan on Koutarou's back, only Sanae-san was left in her body. Sanae-san felt bad about leaving Sanae-chan to him and not doing anything, as a result she helped Koutarou during dinner.

“There are green peppers in it!?”

Yurika reacted to Sanae's words. As Yurika was sitting opposite of Sanae's body, she was sitting on Koutarou's right hand side. She was close to Sanae-chan clinging onto Koutarou, so as this was an important topic for her, she was extra sensitive to quiet voices.

“There's none in it”

”You're lying! Your face is saying that you're lying!”

”I said there's nothing in it. Just eat it”

"Satomi-san, you're trying to trick me into eating it again, aren't you!? I definitely won't get fooled today!!"

"Hey, Yurika, would you rather shut up and eat, or feast on pepper juice?"

"Thank you for the food!! Om nom nom"

"That's better"

If he took his eyes off of her for even a moment, Yurika would eat an unbalanced diet or violate table manners. So it was common for her to be put next to Koutarou so he could keep an eye on her. Especially so when ingredients she disliked were being used.

Elfaria who sat on the opposite of the table to the two looked on in confusion.

"Theia, what is this pepper juice Reios-sama is talking about?"

"It's a drink made from raw green pepper that Koutarou made up"

Theia stopped eating for a moment and answered Elfaria's question.

"... My... what a frightening drink..."

Elfaria's expression quickly paled. Realizing that, Ruth added some additional information.

"Your Majesty, it also uses celery and parsley as secret ingredients. If you don't want to try it, I suggest avoiding an unbalanced diet"

"A-As expected of Reios-sama, there's no openings in his strategy!"

Elfaria had been composed all this time, but now she had paled and was shaking. Elfaria's diet was as unbalanced as Yurika's. Ruth had been bothered about that for a while, but since this was the empress, she was having hard time getting her to improve.

But it seemed that the pepper juice had an effect on Elfaria, as she reached out towards the vegetables she usually avoided. Seeing that, Ruth was satisfied and returned to her own food.

"My, my... it seems Elfaria-san has a surprising weak spot"

"By the way, are you fine with Earth's food, Clan-san?"

Elfaria's was having an unbalanced reason for a different reason to Yurika, as she was having problems with the difference in food culture between Earth and Forthorthe. The different food culture applied to the other Forthorthians as well. Interested, Harumi posed a question to Clan who was using one of her inventions to sit on the wall to eat.

“I am fine. I'm not really picky when it comes to food”

Clan answered Harumi's question without even a slight change in expression. Instead, Kiriha's expression changed.

“Fufu, Clan-dono left all food preparations to Koutarou, so she never had a chance to be picky”

”Kii!?”

Kiriha exposed Clan's secret with a smile, causing her to flash an embarrassed expression. That reaction was enough to get Harumi to understand the rough situation, and she smiled alongside Kiriha.

“I see, Clan-san was traveling with Satomi-kun for a long time after all. Fufufu, so she had already been corrected by then”

”After all, if she was picky, there wouldn't be any food served”

“So it was a question of life or death. Fufufu”

“This isn't a laughing matter!! Just how many nights do you think I spent hungry... that man is the devil!!”

While this was a funny story to Harumi and Kiriha who had no likes and dislikes, it wasn't to Clan who had experienced the life threatening terror first hand.

“... There won't be any food served if you don't eat...?”

Maki stopped eating and repeated what she just heard Kiriha say.

“You don't have any likes or dislikes, Aika-san. You don't have to worry about food not being served”

Shizuka caught what Maki muttered and smiled. Maki's table manners were good, so Shizuka couldn't help but find Maki's worry amusing.

“No, that's not what I meant... but, maybe I should try a more unbalanced

diet”

”Why? You want to be punished? Could it be that you're into that, Aika-san!?”

”No, that's not it! Uhm...”

Maki glanced at Yurika, blushed and looked down. Seeing that, Shizuka got the hint.

”I see, you want Satomi-kun to care for you like Yurika-chan?”

”... Something like that... I have no experience with stuff like that...”

She wanted to be scolded by those close to her, worried for and cared for. She had lived a harsh childhood after all. She admired the things that happened in a normal household. Having realized that, Shizuka quickly moved to resolve the problem.

”Satomi-kun, do you have a moment”

”Ah, Kasagi-san!?”

”It's fine, just leave it to me”

”What is it, landlord-san?”

”As of today, Aika-san will be starting an unbalanced diet for personal convenience, the rest is up to you”

”... I don't get it at all”

”Don't ask for the reason. Please, I'm begging you!”

”...?”

Koutarou was confused by Shizuka's sudden and incomprehensible request. But in the end, she brought her hands together to beg him. Since she always took care of others, Koutarou made his mind up at that point.

”I understand, leave it to me”

”Thank you, Satomi-kun!”

”Aika-san, for starters, you'll be getting pepper juice later”

”Ah, uhm... okay, I'll do my best to be picky”

He still didn't understand the reason, but since Shizuka had asked him, and Maki was the problem, Koutarou decided to stop thinking about it. They weren't the kind to be selfish for no reason, so there was most likely a special reason to it. So it should be for everyone's sake if he simply treated it like a normal unbalanced diet.

“Maki, what do you dislike?”

“Uhm... for the time being, I'm thinking of making it this garland chrysanthemum”

“Ah, I dislike that too!”

“... Bertorion is always giving Shizuka and Maki special treatment”

“I think Satomi-kun is giving you plenty of special treatment too”

“That's not special treatment, he's just playing with me!”

“Then please change with me, Clan-san. I don't want being treated like an upper classman”

“Harumi, the truth is that Clan-dono is not unhappy with her current treatment”

“She's not being honest. Clan has always been like that”

“Fufufu, if you're going to start that, Your Highness is the same”

“Reios-sama, I will strictly protest different treatment because of age”

“What are you going on about all of a sudden!!”

Dinner time with eleven people was lively from beginning to end. Everyone here had some part missing, and someone else supplemented it. The bright and kind time simply flowed on.

Beep.

“Detecting a small-scale time-space distortion. It is with 90% certainty a warp out reaction”

However, that time ended a little bit sooner than expected. Though Koutarou and the others had overcome many problems, there was still one big problem remaining.

“Calculating mass based on the space distortion. Attention. It is with 85% certainty an information pod. It is believed to be an emergency message from the Forthorthe home world. A swift response is requested, My Princess”

That problem was the ongoing coup d'état in the Holy Forthorthe Galactic Empire. Due to various reasons overlapping, handling the problem was difficult, but the time to face it had finally come.

Wriggling

Part 1

Saturday, November 6

There were two information pods that came from the Holy Forthorthe Galactic Empire. The numbers 37 and 82 were engraved on them. That meant that these were pod 37 and 82 from the pods sent. In total 100 pods had been sent, all stuffed with the same information. And of them, two had reached Theia and the others.

The reason for that was because of the distance between Earth and Forthorthe. The two planets were over 10 million light-years apart. One light-year is roughly 10 trillion kilometers, multiplying that by 10 million would give you a countless distance. In comparison, the distance between Earth and the moon is roughly 400,000 kilometers. Even if the pods from Forthorthe were to be sent anywhere within the lunar orbit, the margin of error allowed within their warp was less than 1 in 100 trillion.

Being that accurate with a single warp would be difficult, so having several super-long distance warps was standard. Even if there was an error in margin, there would be no problems. As the warp distance was shortened, the margin of error was decreased, so having more warps was safer.

However, in the case of information pods without people onboard, accuracy and safety on that scale wasn't necessary. Moreover, as only one pod needed to arrive out of the 100 fired, there were less than half of the regular amount of warps. As a result, information reached earth, though it was slower than hyperspace communication, it was far faster than a spaceship.

Knowing those scientific circumstance, the moment Theia saw the numbers engraved in the pods, her expression changed as she realized the urgency of the information. As did Clan, Ruth and Elfaria.

“We can't wait for the entire quarantine period. Ruth, open the pods right away!”

“Yes, I'll send a robot!”

There was no way to tell what was contained in something picked up from space. One couldn't be careless even when dealing with something sent from an ally. That's why washing, sterilizing and quarantine it was normal, but they couldn't wait for that now. So instead, a labor robot would be used to pull out the information inside. This meant that the robot would also need to be washed, sterilized and quarantined, but they didn't have the time to worry about that.

“... Opening the pods”

The two retrieved pods were kept in the arrival and departure deck intended for quarantine. Ruth operated a labor robot to approach one of them and used the extended arm to operate the control panel on the side of it. The pod reacted right away and a small hatch next to the panel was released. Inside the pod was placed on a metallic tray and presented to the labor robot.

“It seems to be paper file and a data chip for computers wrapped in plastic bag”

“So hurry up in other words. Ruth, hurry and read that data chip”

Theia's intuition told her that the data chip and paper file had the same information. If this was vital information, the sender would want it readable no matter what happened, and accounted for various situations. But also because it was urgent. Theia's intuition proved correct as the labor robot connected the data chip to itself.

“The current empress, Elfaria Dana Forthorthe is suspected of having embezzled a formidable sum of public funds. On top of that, she is suspected of having murdered a journalist who—”

“This is... broadcasts and summaries of collected information from the homeworld. The sender is... father!? Woops, the sender is the Pardomshiha and

Wenranka alliance”

“So they've finally made their move...”

Theia's expression turned serious as she stared at the delivered information next to Ruth. That expression looked very similar to how she had looked when she first came to room 106.

“Theia, it looks like the time has come to make your resolve”

”Mother, I already have”

Elfaria put her hand on Theia's shoulder, which loosened up her expression a little. However, the light residing within her eyes didn't weaken in the slightest. Theia knew that this was the beginning of the greatest trial placed on her and Elfaria.

The confrontation between Elfaria and the military began more than 20 years ago. The military had a lot of strength even back then and have a tendency of intervening with the government. Elfaria noticed that and made it her policy to call of a disarmament. If she were to become empress, she promised the citizens to keep the military from running amok. Even the powerful military would have no choice but to accept the disarmament if it was backed by public opinion. Regardless of what they did in secret, in the public eye, they had sworn loyalty to the royal family. Sensing that something terrible would happen if they left Elfaria be, they used all methods possible, formal and secretive, to keep Elfaria from ascending the throne. However, she overcome all of their obstructions and became empress. As a result, disarmament became the reality, and the military's power was greatly reduced. While the price Elfaria had to pay was far from small, she had come out victorious.

For a while after that, the military stayed low. However, they took pride in having protected the country for 2,000 years. As the Blue Knight himself had been the one to lead that army, they strongly thought of themselves as the Blue Knight's successors. That's why, he legendary empress Alaia aside, they couldn't endure being played around with by some thoughtless ruler. There, the top brass of the military began building up a strong army that wouldn't be affected by the emperor's quality, and began making moves under the surface. However this was an act divinizing Alaia and assuming all emperors were incompetent, and an

excuse for the military to escape from the rule of the emperor. Because they wanted to do as they pleased, they labelled the current empress more incompetent than Alaia to justify their own recklessness. In other words, the military had started a very gradual coup d'état.

Of course there was a reason why the start was so slow.

The first reason was of course because the disarmament influence was large. The watching eyes of the assembly were also doing their job, and a coup d'etat in that situation wouldn't produce the results they desired.

The second reason was because they had learned that making themselves an enemy out of the public opinion would lead to failure. As Elfaria had ascended the throne with overwhelming support from the public, they wouldn't get the public support from a thoughtless coup d'etat. If that happened, a rule under the military would become unstable, and the public would likely revolt under the banner of a surviving royalty. The first thing they had to do was reduce the empress' reputation, and raise their own at the same time. They were well aware of that.

So the first thing they did was to work over the media. They won over people in important positions through bribes, and when that didn't work, they sent in their own men to create false charges or assassinating them and making it look like an accident. By doing that, they gradually gained control of the media, and they began broadcasting information that was convenient for the military.

As the military worked to seize control of the media, they also worked over the government and financial circles. They began their work once the media was roughly 30% under their control, and they used not only bribes, but also the media. Regardless of the truth, the main news media could be used to affect stock prices and they could easily fabricate statements from politicians. Thus, the military slowly but surely increased their influence, and ruled government and financial circles. At that point, their capital started becoming abundant, and they began on producing illegal weapons or increasing their forces where the public couldn't see. That said, they couldn't pull all of that off right away, and it took 20 years after Elfaria's ascension for the top brass to be satisfied.

Of course, Elfaria wasn't just sitting by idly as that happened, she took all kinds

of countermeasures. However, using only legal measures to stop someone using illegal means was difficult. And if she were to create laws to oppose them, the media under the military's control would label her as an evil dictator. The military's plans were working out splendidly and Elfaria's movements were gradually being restrained.

Eventually Elfaria felt that she herself was in danger, and sent her daughter, Theia, to Koutarou's side using the trial as an excuse. She then resolved herself to confront the military. However, the result was Elfaria's loss, the media and the government and financial circles were under the military's control and the situation had developed the point where even Elfaria couldn't stop it.

Like that, Elfaria was caught by the military and put under house arrest, but the media reported her as being sick. However, Theia was able to find an opening to save Elfaria and successfully fled to Earth.

Koutarou and the others knew what happened afterwards on Earth. But they didn't know what was going on in Forthorthe right now. That was precisely what was stuffed in that information pod.

As of late, the media had completely stopped reporting on her condition and instead began reporting her crimes. Her charges were embezzlement and murder to conceal her secret. Of course, these charges were concocted by the military. They had created enough evidence to strip Elfaria of her imperial rights and get a guilty verdict on trial.

In the current state, the military's plans were almost fully complete, and Elfaria's popularity was not what it used to be. The public was almost perfectly split on their opinion. However, having come this far, all they needed to do was have the media continue making an uproar. By doing that, they'll eventually sway the minds of the rest. The public opinion would surely lean towards not supporting Elfaria. The military would eventually dispatch a fleet to capture Elfaria. The politicians under military control had already approved of this without deliberation.

The pretext for the fleet dispatch was to bring Elfaria to trial, but the top brass of the military were secretly hoping that she would resist. If she resisted, they could attack and kill her without hesitation. Of course, even if she didn't, they

would kill her anyways and produce some evidence to show that she did resist.

Part 2

The information in the pod was explained in detail by Elfaria herself. As expected from an empress, her explanation was easy to understand. As a result, it was clear how serious of situation it was, which is why the moment Elfaria stopped speaking, Koutarou let out a sigh.

“Haah... looks like the situation is worse than I thought, Elle”

Koutarou's senses told him that, Elfaria was, using chess terms, in check. Elfaria would be finished by the military's next move.

“But you don't seem to be that worried, Reios-sama”

“Knowing you, you already have something planned, don't you?”

“There's no need for me to follow the rules they've set up after all”

Elfaria flashed a small smile, and affirmed Koutarou's word in an indirect fashion, and she shifted her glance over to Kiriha who was listening in next to Koutarou.

“Wouldn't Kiriha-san already have figured it out?”

“Is that true, Kiriha-san?”

“Yes... if the guard on the information was so hard, it might be best to pretend like she's fallen for the trap”

“That's correct, Kiriha-san”

Elfaria showed a satisfied smile. Her question was a small test to measure Kiriha's abilities, but she lived up to her expectations.

“So what, did you get captured on purpose to get them to show their true colors!?”

“Yes, that's right”

By the time Elfaria noticed the military's movements under the surface, they had gathered quite a bit of influence. Moreover, their control of information was perfect, the less vital information aside, the core information was already out of reach. The people with truly vital information weren't just bribed but their family was also threatened.

Elfaria tried various things, but she felt like she was hitting a dead end, so she went with a big bet. Using herself as a decoy she would rip a hole in the military's information control.

Many moves are made while taking the opponents reactions into account. However, it was hard to take the reaction of the reaction into account. In other words, Elfaria bet on being able to tear apart the military's perfect information control by dangling the large bait of her own freedom and creating a dissonance within the military.

So Elfaria let herself get captured by the military. If they had chosen to use rougher methods, she most likely would have been killed. However, as they hadn't expected to be able to catch her this quickly, the military still hadn't decided what to do. As all kinds of factions were intertwined, they decided to threaten her first. Moreover they began to fight between each other over who the credit belonged to, and other things that normally never happened occurred one after another. When it came to the new problems, the military's information control was too lackluster, and the Elfaria faction was able to gather a lot of information. Theia coming to save Elfaria was thanks to such information.

After that, they brought the people that allied with Elfaria back to Earth. During that time, the military was busy preparing evidence for Elfaria's false charges, but the Elfaria faction people that chose to remain in Forthorthe used that time for various purposes. They used the information they got their hands on when Elfaria was captured to close in on the military conspiracy.

“I knew you were someone who wouldn't take a loss sitting down... but to think you'd go that far”

“It was partly thanks to the military moving as I had expected, but also because Theia and Ruth have grown to become more reliable than I expected”

During their escape from Forthorthe, Theia's and Ruth's battle with the Blue

Knight had been a major influence on the outcome. Though there was a plan for escape, the reason it went so smooth was thanks to their exploits.

“Mother...”

“Your words are wasted on me”

Theia and Ruth stood shoulder to shoulder, wiping away their tears as they smiled proudly. However, Koutarou wasn't smiling.

“Elle, don't even think about doing something like that again”

“I know. I'm sure they won't let me escape that easily next time”

“That's not what I'm talking about... I'm saying that because you... no, Elle-chama is Theia-chan's mother”

“Reios-sama...”

Elfaria's eyes were wide open hearing those unexpected words come from Koutarou's mouth. However, she soon let out a small breath and smiled wryly.

“Fufu, if you're going to bring that reason up, I have no choice but to obey, Reios-sama”

Elfaria had made Theia and Ruth worry, and Koutarou wouldn't let her do it again. He was indirectly telling her to be a proper mother.

“As long as you get it. So what will you do now?”

“The military will dispatch a fleet to capture me. We will leave Earth before they arrive and return to Forthorthe”

“Are you sure it will be okay to return now?”

“If we can come into contact with our allies there, we should be safe. It looks like it was worth risking myself, as they seem to have examined the true enemy”

Amongst the information gained when Elfaria used herself as decoy, the most important one was the information leading to the actual leaders of the quiet coup d'etat. Revealing that information now would just let the media erase it, but since they knew the face and name, they could gather even more clear evidence. If Elfaria presented that evidence herself, the conspiracy could be seen by anyone. The time for Elfaria to return to her home country had finally come.

“In regards, I sadly have to praise you”

“Thank you very much. But please be at ease, I won't do it anymore”

“That's good... So, who are we dealing with?”

“The members in the center are these two”

Elfaria pulled out a hologram of two old men from the information in the pod.

“Wha—”

When he saw the two, Koutarou instinctively held his breath. Even though it was supposed to be a face he saw for the first time, it looked familiar.

“Satomi-kun, could those two be...”

“It can't be!?”

Koutarou wasn't the only one however, as Harumi and Clan did the same. The two men from the hologram looked exactly like people they had met 2,000 years in the past Forthorthe. They were two that Koutarou and the others were deeply connected to and could never forget.

“You'll stand in the way of the royal family once more, huh, Maxfern... and Grevanas...”

The prime minister Maxfern, and his trusted subordinate, the head of the court magicians, Grevanas. While the two on the hologram had different haircuts and hair color, they looked exactly like Maxfern and Grevanas.

“Is this that synchronicity that Clan was talking about as well...?”

Seeing a face familiar to an old enemy, Koutarou's expression turned stern and the sharpness of his glance increased. Koutarou was regaining his senses from 2,000 years ago. The senses of the legendary hero, the Blue Knight.

“... Or maybe it was our destiny to fight here... we couldn't finish it back then after all...”

The girls of room 106 and Elexis looked very similar to people from the past world. And there were people that corresponded to Maxfern and Grevanas. And the fight back then hadn't been settled as the two were blown away to a different time. That's why Koutarou believed that this was what fate had decided

for him, knowing that the two were completely different people who just happened to look the same.

“The leader of the Bandarion band of knights, Lord Marswell Dayora Bandarion. And a high ranking military official who is also the Director-General of military affairs, and Director-General of the science and technology agency, Granado Valkyris. These two have run out of control and are controlling the military”

The man who looked like Maxfern was Lord Bandarion and the man who looked like Grevanas was Director-General Granado. Ironically, the two had gotten their positions because of Elfaria's disarmament.

The past military leaders had tried to escape the royalty's rule, but were removed from their positions during Elfaria's disarmament. Instead, Lord Bandarion and Director-General Granado were among those who succeeded the past leaders.

The two were cooperating with Elfaria on the surface, while under the surface they were concentrating power against her. As a result, they rapidly rose in the ranks while becoming leaders in the anti-Elfaria faction. The Elfaria faction didn't notice the two's ambition until they had already obtained a large amount of power.

“... 2,000 years have passed and you've even become a knight like you've wanted, and you still don't understand anything, Maxfern...”

In the past, Maxfern had been unable to use Signaltin which he had sought for so many years, and he had gone mad. The reason for that was because he was not a knight. Now 2,000 years had passed and a man that looked just like Maxfern stood before them as a knight. However, he wouldn't be able to make Signaltin glow either. While he had the title of a knight, he didn't have the heart of one. Koutarou couldn't help but feel sad.

“Koutarou, we will be returning to Forthorthe and punish these insolent fools”

The masterminds were revealed. All that was left was to secretly gather evidence, and expose the conspiracy. Their media control wasn't complete, if they could get a hold of evidence that nobody could deny, they should be able to sway the public opinion back in their favor. If they did that, then Elfaria could

boldly punish Bandarion and the others. The time of waiting was over, as Theia said, now was the time for their counterattack.

“If they would create a good government, that would be one thing, but they sure don't look like they are. We have to protect Forthorthe”

“Okay. I'm going with you”

“Are you sure? You might have some Forthorthian blood, but this isn't directly related to you”

Theia timidly looked up at Koutarou and asked him with a trembling voice. She wanted Koutarou to come, however at the same time she wanted him to be at the safest place possible. He was the one she could rely on the most, but also the one she didn't want to see hurt the most. That's why Theia couldn't help but feel bad regardless of how he answered.

“Of course I'm related. I'm your knight you know”

“Koutarou...”

Tears began forming in Theia's large eyes. She truly felt bad, but at the same time she felt several times happier to hear Koutarou declare himself as her knight.

“Besides, this is a continuation of something I brought about. I have to go and settle it”

Elexis had returned to Forthorthe with the People of the Earth's spiritual energy technology and Folsaria's magic. His goals were unknown, but it was hard to believe that he wouldn't do anything. Because Koutarou's action had created the People of the Earth and the magical kingdom of Folsaria, stopping Elexis was his duty.

“So just take me with you like it's natural. You have that right”

“Yeah, you're right. You're absolutely right”

Theia wiped away her tears, but they wouldn't stop flowing. So she gave up on wiping them away and proudly puffed up her chest.

“Satomi Koutarou, please lend me your strength. Us alone won't be enough to protect Forthorthe from these fools”

"You only have to order me"

"I have no need to do that, right?"

"... As you wish, My Princess"

In the past, Theia had given Koutarou a single order. A simple order, to live as he pleased. As long as Koutarou was himself, he would have something he would want to protect. That something was what brought him back from the past to the present. On top of that, the desires of the people of the past were added on top of his own. Koutarou would protect that no matter what happened. Theia simply believed in that.

"If Koutarou is going, I'm going too!"

"I will go too. I am in your debt, and you'll need an expert on spiritual energy technology"

"There is a chance that Darkness Rainbow will use their magic for evil, so I will go too"

"Me too. I have to stop Maya-sama, and I can't let Satomi-kun go alone..."

"In that case, let's just all go and settle this. I'm sure Uncle will lend his strength to protect Forthorthe"

"Of course. It's Alaia-dono's country after all"

Like Koutarou, the other girls offered their help. Their reason for wanting to help Theia was the same as Koutarou's. They wanted to do as they pleased and protect what they wanted. They would repay their debt. Though they had gathered and fought her for various reasons, their feelings were the same now.

"Thank you, everyone. However, this will become a fight fiercer than ever before. There is no telling how dangerous it will be. There's no guarantee that you will return alive. Will you still go even then?"

If they headed to Forthorthe alongside Theia, they would without a doubt face a battle more intense than the battle against the People of the Earth's radical faction, and the battle against Darkness Rainbow. After all, the enemy this time was the military of a vast empire with influence over half a galaxy. Theia couldn't say that she would win, and there was no guarantee she would survive. Theia

had told Kiriha and Yurika that she would like them to help when she required it too, but when that time had finally come, she felt bad to make the girls resolve themselves to it.

“Why are both of you leaving me out of this, Theiamillis-san, Bertorion? I also protected the world 2,000 years ago you know?”

“Theiamillis-san, sadly your Blue Knight is only a boy who's a little stronger than normal when he's on his own”

However, the girls saw this as all of their problem. Moreover, the legendary hero that Theia relied on wasn't all that strong on his own. The chances of everyone coming out unscathed become much higher with all of them together. If there would be a problem if someone was missing, they'd just all have to go.

“Looks like she hit a sore spot, Theia”

Koutarou smiled wryly and dropped his shoulders. The truth was exactly what Clan and Harumi said. Without the girls strength, Koutarou wouldn't have been able to save the past Forthorthe. On his own, he was just a normal boy who could handle a sword. So knowing that the dangerous situation would go on for a while, Koutarou couldn't tell the girls not to come. If they weren't around, he would be the one in the way.

“Indeed, how troublesome”

Theia had called it troublesome, but she didn't look very troubled. She was overwhelmingly happy to know that the girls would help, well aware of the dangers.

“Your Highness, let us rely on everyone's strength”

“Ruth is right, Theia. You need as many allies as you can get”

“Yes... everyone, please lend me your strength. It doesn't have to be for the sake of Forthorthe. It can be to reclaim our peaceful everyday life...”

In the end, Theia decided on bringing everyone with her. While it was something very painful, she was very happy at the same time. She had so many people she could rely on now. That fact gave Theia courage, and she resolved herself to fight until the very end.

Part 3

The story goes back by about a week, when a fleet was about to be dispatched from Forthorthe's capital, Fornorn, to capture Elfaria and Theia.

The fleet was a portion of the main forces of the imperial army, but it wasn't all that big. In total there were six ships. One space carrier that served as the flagship, one defensive ship that would protect it, one battleship and two destroyers in charge of directly attacking, and finally a large supply ship that wouldn't take part in battle. The total fleet didn't even amount to 1% of the total forces, but it was a very orthodox composition with no openings. Moreover, in terms of combat capabilities it was more than enough. Even against a royal-class battleship, they had enough firepower to destroy it right away. That's why the two men watching the fleet dispatch were convinced that they would complete their mission or come out victorious in battle.

“This time has finally come... it's finally here, Granado”

“It's taken a long time. It's been almost 40 years since we first met”

Lord Bandarion and Director-General Granado had known each other for a long time. Their first meeting dated back to when they were still students. A knight and a commoner, at first they were estranged due to their difference in position. However, they eventually noticed that they worried about the same thing, and a friendship developed. They were irritated that the world evaluated their abilities lower than what it was.

“It's already been that long since we swore to stand at the top of Forthorthe together, huh”

“Hahaha, we've both started getting white streaks in our hair”

Lord Bandarion's family was a splintered family with a short history, compared to the Melcemhein family which they broke free from. Because of that, the Bandarion family had little influence. In that case, all he needed to do was to

raise his reputation through his deeds, but Forthorthe was already stable, so battles around the Bandarion family's territory wouldn't just conveniently occur. At that rate, he wouldn't be able to overcome the fate he was born from, and while he was feeling very bitter about it, he unexpectedly ended up in a good position because of Elfaria's disarmament. Lord Bandarion's ambition was to use this chance to climb to the very top.

“Ironically enough, it only took this few years thanks to that little brat”

“Indeed... normally it would have taken more time to get on the fast track to the top on your own strength”

Director-General Granado had similar circumstances. He was a well versed scientist but he wasn't getting the reputation he deserved. The reason for that was because his research was mostly around weapons, but he believed the true reason was because of the low status he was born with. The royalty from the Schweiger family and the nobles with ample funds had brilliant careers in the scientific world after all. And like Lord Bandarion, he too found himself in a good position after Elfaria's disarmament. So it was only natural for him to sympathize with Lord Bandarion.

The ambitions the two had were deeply rooted. However, they both had the calmness and prudence to restrain their ambition. That too was similar to Maxfern and Grevanas.

“If that were the case, we might have still been working our way up”

“How frightening. If that were the case, our lifespan would have been our greatest enemy”

“Indeed. We should be grateful for that little brat”

The two were standing on the balcony of the palace that no longer had its master inside, looking up at the six ships flying upwards. These two were the masters of the palace now, and the ships were flying under their orders. On the surface they were a holy knight serving as a general, and the head of the military's scientific department, but their rule secretly reached all of Forthorthe. If the dispatched fleet complete their mission, they would move to gain power in the public eye. The decades long coup d'etat that they had been working on was finally reaching the final stretch.

“In this country's long history, there have been several who have challenged the royal families of Forthorthe, but... not a single one has succeeded. Us two will be the first ones, Granado”

“I can't wait for the day that you sit down on that throne, Bandarion-sama. It's just a little longer... now that it's so close, I can feel the passion I had in my youth revive”

“It's still too early to get old, Granado, if you'd like, you may take that throne”

“You jest”

“I am not. We share the same fate, it doesn't matter which one of us sits on that throne. What we want is our victory after all”

“... Those words alone are enough for me. I want to see you take your place on the throne, Bandarion-sama”

“Then you may watch me seizing control of the galaxy from the VIP seat!”

“... As you wish, My Lord”

With pride filling his heart, Granado respectfully bowed before the lord he chose himself. Bandarion hadn't changed since the past. He was full of pride and strength, and Granado felt that his choice several decades ago hadn't been a mistake.

The fleet's boosters let out a powerful sound and trail, and the bond between the two watching the departing fleet was just as strong. The bond between the two was likely stronger than that of Maxfern and Grevanas. That would surely prove to become a big weapon for them, and it would surely be a lot tougher for this era's princess and Blue Knight to come out victorious against them than Maxfern and Grevanas.

Part 4

At the same time, Maya and Elexis were also watching the departing fleet. They were also in the capital of Fornorn. They were stood at the top floor of DKI's headquarters.

"The military sure are stupid. There's no way they'd win with a force that small"

"It can't be helped. They don't know of the existence of Koutarou-kun and the others, and the Hazy Moon. If they weren't taken into account, this number is more than enough. It's not like they're incompetent, their opponent is just too unreasonable"

"After all, there are more than you attacked with"

"Hahaha, how harsh, Maya. But you're right. If I'm not incompetent, then neither are they. If anything, they are proceeding even more cautiously than I am"

"But there's always the chance of you being incompetent"

"Being aware of that is painful"

Elexis laughed as he took the full brunt of his partner's harsh words. When it came down to it, Maya was correct, as Elexis had underestimated Koutarou and the others and lost. It was certainly possible that he was incompetent.

"But I am the kind of man a woman like you would choose as a partner. I have confidence in myself"

"I just pray I didn't draw the short straw"

"... You certainly never praise me easily"

"But of course. There's countless people that would praise you, right?"

"That's why I like you"

“... You sure are a strange man...”

Elexis knew that Maya's words were a sign of trust. She showered flattery over those she only sought to use. So her not doing that was a sign of her trust in her partner. As he managed a large enterprise, he was grateful for that and it was one of the reasons he wouldn't part with Maya.

Maya felt similar to Elexis. To her, it was normal to use others and then discard them, but she found herself unable to do so with Elexis. While it was partially because she had no replacement for him, she also felt good from Elexis trusting her. They were most likely making up for what they were missing.

“Well, at this rate, that fleet will likely be destroyed by the Blue Knight and the Hazy Moon”

The military was unaware of the Blue Knight's true specs when Koutarou was controlling it, and they also didn't know about Clan's Hazy Moon. So the moment they attempted an attack from the front, they would get ambushed by the Hazy Moon and the Blue Knight would sweep in to clean them up.

“... Stupid, can't you just enjoy this atmosphere some more? Geez, this is why men are...”

“Hm? What's the matter?”

“No, it's nothing. So what are you going to do?”

“I was thinking of putting the military in my debt. I was thinking of teaching them a means to attack more effective than a fleet battle”

Elexis was neither an ally of the military nor the royal families. Since he would seize power in the end, he didn't care who won, but in order to secure a foothold for the future, making the military an ally would be effective.

“So you'll put them in debt by selling of information you don't need, huh”

“I'm originally a trade professional after all”

So for starters, Elexis was going to pick out some information on Koutarou and the others that no longer had much value to Elexis and the others, to sell to the military and earn a favor.

“I better be careful and avoid getting some trash pawned off to me as well”

“At the moment, I believe I'm the one buying off of you”

“I wonder”

Maya was actually liking Elexis' idea, but in contrast to her feelings, she spoke with dislike. Maya felt that her acting that way was strange, but at the same time believed it was fine that way. However, it would be a while longer until she realized that this was her relying on Elexis.

“Now then...”

”What is it?”

With the discussion reaching a pause, Elexis stood up from his seat and approached the antique shelf on the wall. He opened a glass door and peeked inside before pulling out a bottle and two glasses. Both the bottle and the glasses were very luxurious.

“It's nothing, I was just thinking I'd treat you to some Forthorthe alcohol”

“You're planning on charging me after I've taken a sip, aren't you”

”No... I was thinking of enjoying the atmosphere some more”

”Stupid!”

”You don't want any?”

“Just shut up and hand it over!”

”Okay, okay”

Elexis approached Maya with bottle and glasses in hand. She had become his partner due to a bizarre twist of fate. However what was even more bizarre was that Elexis liked Maya. Maya was a type of woman he hadn't seen before, and she would often make him recognize a side of himself hadn't noticed before. The same was true even now as he realized that he wanted to spend more time with Maya, and decided to do just that.

Second Coming of the Legend

Part 1

Sunday, November 7

Regardless of how much technology the Blue Knight and the Hazy Moon carried, they still needed to replenish supplies. When it had just been Theia and Ruth, the need hadn't been all that big, but once the Elfaria faction people came onboard, the need increased. Fortunately, they were able to resupply from the People of the Earth on the surface. And with the existence of the transfer gate, there was no need to go down to the surface. If there were any problems, that would be that a lot of people were necessary if they needed to resupply in a hurry. They didn't have any fully automated devices like in Forthorthe. Because of that, Koutarou and the others were helping with the resupply so they could depart as soon as possible.

“Ruth-san, where should I carry this?”

“The right leg calf's 12th warehouse”



“Okay, to the right leg calf's 12th warehouse”

Koutarou wrote the destination on the cart's plate. Because there was a large amount of supplies to be carried, if they mixed up the warehouse they were stored, there would be a lot of trouble. Finally, Ruth checked the plate and the preparation to move the supplies were complete.

“Wait!”

That was when a helmet wearing Sanae ran up.

“It's dangerous so go slower

“Okay, okay”

Sanae was pushing a cart like Koutarou was. For safety reasons, two people worked together as a team, and today, Sanae was Koutarou's partner. Because of that, she was headed for the same destination.

“So, where are we going next?”

“Next is the opposite leg, the right leg calf's 12th warehouse”

“Okay, right leg calf's 12th warehouse... Koutarou is it right from the way we're looking?”

“No, it's the right from the Blue Knight's perspective”

The Hazy Moon's resupply was already complete. The delay on the Blue Knight's resupply was because of its hull structure. Normally, the main warehouse was kept on the bottom of a ship to keep it accessible from everywhere. This also made the center of gravity more steady. However, because the Blue Knight was structured as a humanoid, leaving all of the supplies in the lower body of the ship, supplies would be very hard to access from the upper body. So instead, warehouses were constructed in both the arms and the legs. Which meant that there were a lot of destinations to keep track of, slowing down the resupply work.

“Because of the weird shape, carrying supplies is hard”

“You should have just made it round instead of being so picky”

“Less talking, and get to work!!”

"Okay okay"

"I get it, geez..."

Being yelled at by an angry Theia who was supervising the entire work, Koutarou and Sanae pushed their carts towards the gates. The gates directly connected the People of the Earth's warehouse to the Blue Knight's warehouses. The two approached the gate leading to the right leg calf amongst the many gates on the wall.

"Waaaah, Shizuka-san, where are you!?"

Just as the two were about to enter their gate, Yurika came running out of it in tears. She was pushing a cart like Koutarou and Sanae, but for some reason she was alone.

"Yurika, what happened!?"

"Satomi-san, Satomi-san, please help me! Shizuka-san disappeared all of a sudden!"

Yurika had paired up with Shizuka but she seemed to have separated with her, and she returned here in tears.

"Landlord-san did? Where were you carrying your supplies?"

"Koutarou, it says the torso's 22nd warehouse"

"Which means... calm down and listen, Yurika"

"Where did Shizuka-san go!?"

"Like I said, calm down"

"O-Okay"

Koutarou lightly flicked his finger at Yurika's forehead, and she began to calm down. Since this was repeated almost daily, her response was pretty much conditioned.

"Yurika, you're the one who disappeared"

"Hueh?"

"This is the gate connecting to the right leg calf. The torso is the middle one"

“It's not here!?”

”Yeah, yours is over there”

“Shizuka-saaan!!”

Having finally realized her destination, Yurika ran towards the gate leading to the torso without saying thanks. The Blue Knight being humanoid had the biggest influence on Yurika. Just today, she had gotten lost five times.

“Koutarou”

”I know what you want to say. But there's no time”

”That's not it... is the destination written on her plate really meant to be the torso's 22nd warehouse?”

“... Sanae, don't say scary things so casually”

Koutarou and Sanae suppressed their unease as they passed through their gate. The resupply would still go on for a bit longer. They couldn't afford to delay their own work to worry about Yurika.

Part 2

The space battleship, the Blue Knight, was over a kilometer long humanoid structure, and just the part below the knee was 250 meters long. Koutarou's and Sanae's destination was the 12th warehouse there. Because the gate was located right under the knee, there was still a 100 meter distance to the 12th warehouse. During those 100 meters, Koutarou and Sanae crossed paths with several people. The Forthorthians that had come with Elfaria, and the People of the Earth. All of them were working on resupplying the ship. And one thing they all did was to bow to Koutarou.

“Hehehe, everyone's greeting Koutarou”

Noticing that everyone was greeting Koutarou, Sanae smiled happily. Her smile was as if she was the one being praised. She was happy that Koutarou was being praised, and she was aware that he was being of help to troubled people.

“Even though there's no need to”

“That's not true. You helped them all after all”

“You all worked hard too, so it's not like I'm all that important”

“It helps me when you're getting all the praise. I get a funny feeling if I get thanked”

“I get a funny feeling too”

Koutarou on the other hand felt perplexed. There hadn't been a single incident that Koutarou had resolved on his own, yet he getting all the gratitude himself felt off.

“You're the leader so just give up. Red does a lot of things as the representative”

“I'm Blue though”

“Blue is the Blue Knight's color. If you admit that you are the Blue Knight, it's only obvious that people would thank you, Reios-sama! Ohohohoho!”

Sanae responded to Koutarou by mimicking Elfaria in a very unnatural way. As she did, Koutarou's expression turned bitter.

“Don't you mimic Elle. I won't forgive you if you grow up into an adult like her”

”Oka~y”

Though she had tried to be a little mischievous, Sanae basically wanted to be a good girl before the person she loved, so she had no intentions of turning out like Elfaria. Her mimicry just now was just a little prank.

“But the truth is I want Koutarou to just be our hero”

”That would work out better for me too”

“Aha, so you're fine with being thanked by me and everyone else then?”

“I'm grateful to all of you too after all”

”I see, that's probably true”

”It balances out right?”

”Yeah... hey, am I working out as your Kabutonga?”

“Yeah. You can take pride in it”

”Ehehe”

Just as the two reached a pause in their discussion, the two reached the 12th warehouse. Sanae ran up to the door with a bounce in her step and pushed the panel by the side with her hand.

“Open Sesame!”

Immediately after Sanae's overly theatrical performance, the door slid opened without a sound. The door the warehouse opened by a combination of voice-print and the capillaries in the palm. Sanae loved this and repeated the same thing every time she came.

“You love doing that, don't you”

”Opening the path for your own fate is Sanae-chan's principle!”

“Talk about exaggerating for just a door”

”Tehehehe”

The 12th warehouse was several meters in both length and breadth. It was wide enough for both of them to enter with their carts without it feeling too tight. The two stopped their carts and worked together to unload the containers.

“What's in this box?”

”Uhm, mostly food. It says potato on the side of the box we're carrying now”

”Isn't it bad having food in a faraway place like this?”

“If there's a fight, we don't know what parts of the ship will get damaged, so it's best to split it up and keep a little of it everywhere”

”Oh... so there's a lot of thinking put into this”

There were two containers loaded on each of the carts. The containers were the same size as large cardboard boxes and they were specially prepared to be able to preserve their contents for a long period of time. But since the gravity on the Blue Knight was being controlled to make it easier on the work.

“That should do it”

“Alright, let's go back!”

Work ended in a few minutes, and the containers perfectly fit in the open space. The two left the warehouse in order to carry more supplies.

“Kyaaa!?”

”What!?”

That was when a warning siren suddenly blared throughout the passage. At the same time a red revolving light turned on, fueling the tension further. The two stood still, surprised by the sudden alarm, but looking at the revolving light, the two calmed down and looked at each other.

“Let's go, Sanae!”

“Yeah!”

The two began running, leaving their carts behind. They couldn't tell what had happened from just the alarm. However, both of them knew what time it was. Regardless of what was happening, their first priority was to get to Theia and Elfaria and protect them.

Part 3

Shortly after departing on their mission to capture Elfaria, information was delivered through the Melcemhein band of knights to Lord Bandarion. It was information that the Blue Knight's combat potential was above normal. The origin of the information was unknown, but since it came through the Melcemhein band of knights, it was hard to believe it was a complete lie. But even if the combat potential was above normal, it was still just one ship. They knew they wouldn't lose, but some countermeasures were required to keep the damage to the minimum.

Fortunately, there was a continuation to the sent information. It was information regarding an illegal organization on Earth that was resupplying the Blue Knight. The information pertained not just to the size of the organization and their combat capabilities, but also the location of their base and plans over it. They were contents that practically told them to challenge Elfaria to a surface battle.

“With this detailed information, I guess it's only natural for the sender not to reveal themselves”

“Even if we sent a spy into the Elfaria faction, they would be in danger if they revealed the location after all”

At first, Lord Bandarion and Director-General Granado didn't trust the information. At most, they just couldn't ignore it as it came via the Melcemhein band of knights. But with information pertaining to an illegal organization on Earth being included, they instead started assuming the information was reliable. There was no need to go this far with false information, so it was more likely that the Melcemhein family or someone close to them had a spy in the Elfaria faction ranks.

“And... if we attack Majesty Elfaria by relying on this information, it would be

like telling the sender that we want to cooperate”

“Considering the accuracy of this information and the timing... I can think of one more who sent this information apart from a spy... that DKI boy”

Lord Bandarion suspected another possibility, namely the young CEO of DKI, Elexis. Even though he wasn't a spy, he could still have access to this level of information, and he should also have a motive.

“Now that you mention it, he hasn't appeared in the public lately... could it be that he's been on Earth ever since he attacked the Blue Knight?”

“If you think of it like that, then it makes sense. He continued his activity on Earth for some reason, and once the situation changed he returned to Forthorthe. As a result, he has more accurate information than we do in regards to Earth. Perhaps that's why he knows that we'll lose if we attack from the front”

“That can't be... would my fleet be destroyed by a single ship...?”

Director-General Granado could hardly believe it. This time, a fleet even larger than when Elexis attacked the Blue Knight had been dispatched. If they were to lose even then, then just how much combat potential did that one ship truly have. Being the Director-General of military affairs and the science and technology agency, Granado understood just how frightening that aspect really was.

“It might be because of that illegal organization mentioned”

Lord Bandarion didn't fear the Blue Knight as much as Granado did. Instead, he suspected that the illegal organization had something to do with it. The truth was that they would lose from going up against the Blue Knight with its true specs plus the Hazy Moon, so Lord Bandarion was close.

“The reason aside, that boy will use this incident to tell us that we're better of teaming up with him. In other words, it's a sales pitch”

“And at the same time, he's judging us?”

“That's right. If we use this information to secure our victory, it would mean that we have high regards for his value. It would also prove that we have that much intellect and capacity”

"If we instead were to ignore him and lose, it would show that there's no point in teaming up"

"Seriously, what a shrewd boy"

"What should we do?"

"For starters, we'll confirm the validity of the information. Are the maps and plans over the base accurate, and are there any space-time distortions in that area... that will become the decisive factor"

"I'll make a note right away"

They still didn't know if the DKI boy, Elexis, was the one who had sent them the information or not. Lord Bandarion was convinced of it, but they would still need to confirm it. In regards to that, the validity of the information would indirectly prove it was from Elexis. And if that was the case, then they'd have to accept Elexis' unexpressed offer. That was what Lord Bandarion meant by shrewd boy.

"Fufufu... still, we've gotten old"

"Ha?"

"While we were thinking of what to do, the younger generation made its move. Just like we did in the past"

"But in the end, you will be the one to stand at the top, Bandarion-sama"

"I intend to. I won't let that boy do as he pleases just yet"

Lord Bandarion felt like it was only natural for someone like Elexis to appear, just like he himself had in the past. However, he was confident that he would be the one to seize control of the country. That's why Lord Bandarion decided to challenge Elfaria and the others to a surface battle like the information hinted at. Doing that would prove how accurate the information was, and he should be able to get a better grasp on Elexis' abilities and intentions. Lord Bandarion's side would need to judge Elexis as well.

Part 4

With those circumstances, the coup d'état army attacked the surface in a very faithful to basic way. Because the reliability of the information was still in doubt, they couldn't make any bold attacks. The fleet commander wanted to keep the betting to just choosing to attack the surface.

The plan of attack was very simple. As a result of prior observation, they had determined that the Blue Knight was currently in the middle of receiving supplies from the base in question. Now that they were immobile was the time to strike, but as they had no relations with Earth, the army couldn't officially enter. So instead, the special forces that was travelling with the fleet was dispatched to infiltrate the enemy's base. They would use the gate that should exist within the base to infiltrate the Blue Knight and capture Elfaria.

At first glance this seemed like a difficult mission, but it wasn't as hard as it looked. Being heavily automated, the Blue Knight had little crew. As long as they could deceive the IFF, they wouldn't have to worry about being attacked by the defense mechanisms. As this was a former allied ship, doing that wouldn't be all that hard. As a result, whether they could get through the gate or not would determine if the mission succeeded or not. However, that was just common sense in Forthorthe. The truth was that it wouldn't be as simple as they thought.

“Two of the spiritual energy sensors that's been set up in an outer perimeter around the base have detected approaching suspicious individuals Ho-! The fourth sensor on the southeast side and the third sensor on the north side have gone off Ho-!”

“There's nothing that can be seen when observing the spots with the optical cameras Ho-. But when we look closer, we can see some men wearing clothes that change colors like a chameleon getting closer Ho!”

The first to detect the enemy was the People of the Earth's technology. As the

Forthorthe army had no spiritual energy technology, they easily tripped the spiritual energy sensors. The alarm from when Koutarou and Sanae were in the warehouse came from this.

“It's the active camouflage clothes that the Forthorthe special forces use. They're easy to pinpoint because the quality is poor”

Ruth used her unmanned scout to gather more details on the spots Karama and Korama had specified. Clan added in her image processing and gave Koutarou and the others a clear image of the men the haniwas mentioned.

Of course, the men still hadn't noticed that they were already detected. Clan had called the quality of their camouflage clothes poor, but that was just when comparing it to Clan's technical level. They were high in quality for mass produced goods. On normal missions, they wouldn't be detected until they were very close. This wasn't the mens fault, but rather because of the unexpected high level of technology from Clan and the People of the Earth.

“In total there are 45 of them, huh. That's quite the number”

A group of men wearing matching battle fatigues were being projected as a hologram before Koutarou. Koutarou and Sanae ran towards the gate leading to Earth while looking at the hologram.

“Hey, Koutarou. Why are their numbers different?”

Sanae who was looking at the same hologram tilted her head in confusion. For some reason, there was a different number of men on the north and southeast side. 15 men were approaching from the north side and 30 from the southeast. Their numbers were unbalanced for a pincer attack.

“The group with less men on the north side are probably going to run distraction. Analyze the details of the footage, the north side should have more long range weapons”

“Kiriha-sama is correct! Only the men on the north side have large weapons!”

“The north side men will attack us with long range weapons. And while our attention is turned to the north, the 30 men on the south east will rush in. Based on the position, it's almost certain that their aim is the gates in the warehouse. They're after Elfaria-dono on the Blue Knight!”

Kiriha's brains made the aim of the special forces clear. The warehouse in the base was on the southeast side of the site. It was a very simple and logical plan consisting of a diversion in the north and the shortest possible distance to their objective”

”Ruth and I will take care of the north side! They're 100 years too early to go up against us in a long range battle!”

”Please leave this to us, Master!”

”Koutarou, you take Shizuka with you and head south east!”

”Okay! Landlord-san, let's meet by the gate!”

”Yes, I'm almost there!”

Knowing their opponent's plan, Theia could handle this. Matching the opponent's strategy, Theia effectively placed personnel.

”Maki, you come with us! We might need your backup just in case!”

”Okay, I'll come to you two”

”I caaan't! I don't know how to get back!”

”Wait a minute, Yurika, where are you right now!?”

”I'm by Elfaria-san! I got some tea and snacks from her!”

”So you couldn't meet up with Shizuka after all”

”I'm sorry, I'm so sorry, it wasn't on purpose!”

Yurika was in an unexpected place. Her original destination was the torso's 22nd warehouse. But in the end, she never reached it, and for some reason she ended up in the residence division and met up with Elfaria. Elfaria had helped her when she was lost.

”No, good job Yurika! You just stay there!”

”You protect Elle! Got it!?”

”O-Okay!! I'll do my best!!”

While it might have been unexpected, it was the correct thing to do considering the circumstances. As Yurika could use all kinds of spells, she could

respond to any situation, and was the most suitable to protect Elfaria.

“Harumi, you go with Koutarou! We have to consider his sword after all”

“Yes, I understand!”

“Kiriha you move freely based on the situation!”

“Got it. Karama, start off with assisting Theia-dono. Karama, you come with me to Koutarou”

“Gotcha! I'm off Ho-!”

“I will protect Ane-san Ho-!”

“Clan, you stay as back up! Unless something serious happens, don't come out!”

The only one hard to use was Clan. Her Schweiger family had an amiable relationship with the military, and things would get complicated if they suddenly turned hostile towards one another. Moreover, the Hazy Moon wasn't officially at Earth, so she couldn't allow herself to get spotted by the military for multiple reasons.

“You don't need to worry, I know my own position! But Yurika, if things really become dangerous, don't hesitate to bring Elfaria with you here!”

“Thank you very much!”

Theia, Ruth, Maki and Karama were in charge of intercepting the troops from the north in charge of the diversion. And Koutarou, Sanae, Harumi, Shizuka, Kiriha and Korama would be fighting against the main force from the southeast. Yurika would be by Elfaria to protect her in the worst case scenario. Clan left her Cradle on standby in the sky, and moved to assist Koutarou and the girls. For teams divided up so quickly, they were well balanced in terms of offense and defense, and they were a good match for their opponents. As expected, when it came to battles, Theia was without a doubt a genius.

Part 5

By the time Maki and Karama grouped up with them, Theia and Ruth were already preparing to attack. Being as impatient as she was, Theia was going to launch an attack first, and not being able to let her lord fight on her own, Ruth followed suit.

“Ridiculous, trying to defeat me with just 15 people!”

The missile launcher attached to Theia opened all of its hatches at once. The Battle Dress that Theia was currently wearing had a yellow base color. The name of it was Guardian Yellow, which had equipment specialized for base defense, and in exchange for its massive firepower and defenses, it had unremarkable mobility. It was equipment intended to fire missiles and large-scale cannons while being protected by a sturdy barrier and anti air guns. It was perfect for the current situation.

“Ruth-chan, I'm sending over the spiritual energy sensor data, Ho!”

“I've got it. Your Highness, all 15 of the enemy force have been targeted”

Karama, who had come with Theia, had an accurate reading on the location of all 15 of the special forces. Ruth received that data and processed it before sending it forwards to the fire control system for Theia's Combat Dress. In other words, both Karama and Ruth were in charge of guiding Theia's missiles.

“Maki, can you enhance my senses!?”

“Leave it to me, that's my specialty! Keen Sense, Lightning Reflex!”

Next, Maki who had only just gotten there cast two spells in succession. A spell to enhance the senses, and a spell to improve reflexes and motor functions. Both were perfect for accurate and swift attacking, and for someone who specialized in mind manipulation type magic like Maki, they were easy to cast. As a result, Theia's senses became sharper than a wild animal and her movements were

more accurate than an artisan's.

“Fufun, I'll show you what it means to fight against me!”

Theia laughed fearlessly and held a large-scale cannon with both hands. The cannon was over twice the length of Theia and from a long distance it looked like she was holding a long spear.

“Release firearms control on the Warship Hybrid Cannon, manual bombardment!”

“As you wish, My Princess”

Theia released the computer control on the cannon as she would control the cannon to attack herself. Theia spotted her targets with her eyes that now had vision sharper than a hawk. With her improved accuracy of movements, her aim didn't waver even a little. Being enhanced by spells, she was now far more accurate than the computer would be.

“Anchor!”

Two loud cracks rang out.

Next a stake stabbed into the ground from each of her feet, fixating her body to the ground. The weapon she was holding was on a level beyond what a person could control. After a shell was fired from a gunpowder blast, it was then further accelerated by an electromagnetic barrel. It was literally shot out too fast to be seen. As a result, it was impossible to fully kill the recoil even with Guardian Yellow's weight and Forthorthe's technology. So fixating herself to the ground using primitive means like that was necessary.

“Blue Knight, raise the flag!”

“As you wish, My Princess”

The preparations to attack were complete. Immediately after that, a flag with a golden flower spread out overhead. It wasn't a flag with physical form, but was drawn in the air by lasers. The flower was exquisite and beautiful.

“Men, are you listening!? We will begin our attack now!!”

This combat flag reported when Theia herself was taking to the battlefield. It was there to show off her existence to both friend and foe. Forthorthe royalties

don't use sneak attacks. They fought and defeated their enemies fair and square. The big flag that spread several meters in each direction boldly fluttered with the wind.

As the golden flag waved in the sky, the special forces, approaching the People of the Earth's base from the north, fell into panic. Special forces with a lot of training under their belt, fell into panic.

“Receiving an IFF signal!! Confirming the combat flag. Gold. Flower. It's princess Theiamillis!!”

“The princess herself is on the front lines!?”

”Leave that for later, that flag means that we've already been dete—”

The next moment, a certain something assaulted them.

Kaboom

“Uwah!?”

First off, they were hit by a sound large enough to shake the entire forest, and at the same time they barrier protecting the entire group was destroyed. The shell fired straight at the special forces pierced through the tough barrier and smashed the generation device to pieces. Not stopping at that, the shell with massive kinetic energy behind it continued to smash several mobile weapons behind the forces. The sound they heard was just a reminder of it. It was a shock wave created from the shell too fast to see.

“Squad leader, a message from headquarters, a high energy reaction detected from the Blue Kn—”

“Get dooooown!! They're bombarding the surface!!”

Next they were assaulted by several pillars of light. It was a surface bombardment from the Blue Knight in orbit, and it only shot the mobile weapons protecting the special forces.

“Emergency alert! 30 anti-personnel missiles are approaching, take evasive actions!”

Finally, missiles assaulted them from above. Their strategy support computer was urging the special forces to evade, but they had just thrown themselves on

the ground to avoid the bombardment. There was no way they could dodge.

“Impossible, anti-personnel missiles without a lock-on!?”

The missiles were accurately being guided towards the group. However, that was strange. There had been no signs of a radar lock on until now. The missiles were too spread out to be using heat or optic guidance. It was possible that the missiles were being guided by the Blue Knight's optics in orbit, but there would be slight lag due to communications, so it wasn't suited for use with anti-personnel missiles. Yet the missiles were flying straight towards the soldiers. Two missiles directly hit each of the soldiers that had dived to the ground.

“Uwaaaaaah!? ... Wait, what is this!?”

“It looks like... paint”

“They're mock missiles for practice!”

However what confused the soldiers further was that the missiles weren't carrying the usual payload, but paint for practice. Their bodies were unharmed and instead they were covered in the colors red and yellow.

“I don't know what's going on, but we're saved!”

“Luck's on our side!!”

The soldiers were simply happy that they were okay. However, there were those among them that weren't rejoicing. They were the squad leader and his retainer.

“... So this is princess Theiamillis...”

“Squad leader, did princess Theiamillis mix up her missiles?”

“A gun is one thing, but there's no way she'd mix up missiles”

“Then, why?”

“Can't you tell? This is the princess warning us”

“Warning us?”

“We were just killed three times by Her Highness' attacks”

What if the shell fired from the cannon wasn't a simple armor piercing shell.

What if the Blue Knight's surface bombardment hadn't just hit the mobile weapons.

What if anti-personnel missiles hadn't been mock missiles.

The soldiers would have without a doubt died. Assuming that all three times were simple coincidences would be foolish. Instead it was a message to them from princess Theiamillis.

"She could have done it if she wanted. She won't show any mercy next time. She's telling us that if you don't want that then retreat or surrender, pick whatever you please"

The soldiers were now all staring at the squad leader. His words sent a ripple through their minds. The squad leader's retainer spoke out.

"Now I really don't get it, why would Her Highness do that? Wouldn't it be safer just to kill us?"

"It's probably the same reason as Her Majesty Alaia. Princess Theiamillis is from the Mastir family and we are Forthorthe citizens"

"... Squad leader, has Her Majesty Elfaria really committed the crimes being broadcasted?"

It was a natural doubt. Empress Elfaria had embezzled public funds and even murdered to hide it. However, when facing against her daughter, princess Theiamillis, she showed justice and affection. So it was only obvious for the soldiers to feel like that was a major contradiction. As it had happened in a battle with their lives on the stake, the soldiers felt that especially strongly.

"I don't know either... no, I can't tell anymore. However, that's why there's something I know for certain"

"And that is?"

"That the people we are point our guns at truly are royalty of Forthorthe."

They looked towards an opening in the forest. There they saw the smoking barrel of the cannon that had just fired a shell at them, now facing skyward, and a girl with blonde hair boldly stood there. Seeing the girl with her long barrel and the flag above her, it looked like she was physically raising her flag.

The girl's name was Theiamillis Gre Mastir Sagurada Forthorthe.

Both her golden hair and the flag above her fluttered in the wind.

Part 6

The explosive sounds from Theia's bombardment in the north could be heard in the southeast as well. And as if that was their signal, the force approaching from the southeast began moving. They left the forest they were hiding in and ran towards the base's warehouse. Their goal was the gate within, and Elfaria who should be beyond it.

“Hurry up, we're going to capture her before the gate closes!”

The commander in charge of the forces hurried the soldiers. They didn't have a lot of time. It took several hours to create a transfer gate safe for humans to pass through, but once set up it only took a few seconds to open and close. But when it came to larger gates used to transport supplies, it took at least a few minutes to close and open due to the space-time distortion. If the forces made it through the gate during those few minutes, they could forcibly enter the system and keep the gate open and take over the Blue Knight. As a result, they worked under the assumption that the gate would close a few minutes after the battle up north began. They had to move as quickly as possible.

“They're coming, hurry up, Koutarou!”

Sanae had a grasp of the enemy's positions. In total there were 30 of them. They were shortening the distance quickly while leaking hostility. If they space out, the enemy would get into the warehouse, so Sanae hurried her allies.

“Koutarou, you and Shizuka take the lead”

“Leave it to us! GOL, your targets are everyone in front of us”

“IFF set, targets are the 30 men and the mobile weapons to our front. Enemy forces show signs of military action. GOL is beginning its attack”

“... You work fast as always”

“I am honored by your praise”

"Uncle, could you use most of the magical power for defense?"

"Are you fine with the offense?"

"I only need that if the enemy is though. If I go too far they'll die"

"That's true"

Following Kiriha's instructions, Koutarou and Shizuka charged the enemy. It was far too casual of a charge, but that wasn't a problem for these two. GOL was protecting Koutarou, and Alunaya was protecting Shizuka.

"Sanae, you suppress the enemy from behind Koutarou and Shizuka"

"I'll do my best to be annoying!"

At this level Sanae would be fine, but as Sanae dodged attack by reading the enemy's aura, she ran the risk of getting hit if the enemy attacked someone else. So Sanae's job was to stay back and push back anyone that tried to rush up.

"Harumi, you stay at the back with me"

"Yes! Satomi-kun, the same as always?"

"Please do"

"Korama, protect Harumi"

"Got it! Will you be fine on your own, Ane-san Ho?"

"That's why I'm at the back, just in case"

"Ane-san sure is responsible Ho-!"

In the back was Harumi, Kiriha and Korama. Harumi would use magic to support the others from the safer back lines. Kiriha did the same using a beam rifle that fired spiritual energy, while commanding from the rear where she could keep better track of things. Korama would protect Harumi who slowed down whenever she cast spells. The back lines were all about protecting your allies.

"To think they'd come at us with just five people"

"They're either brave or stupid..."

"They just probably can't fall back because they have to protect Her Majesty Elfaria"

“So loyal subjects, huh”

“Give it your best. They're a troublesome type of enemy regardless of situation”

Meanwhile, the imperial army's special forces with their abundance in experience weren't underestimating Koutarou and the others. Courageous, reckless, loyal, they were all dangerous reasons. Mercenaries working for money were a lot more logical.

However, this time around, their opponents were irrational for a completely different reason. That reason was that the very existence of the one charging the special forces were irrational. The one that embodied irrationality the most, was the knight in blue armor leading the charge.

“An awfully antique guy is coming”

“That armor is the master/slave controller in order to move the Blue Knight. Though it seems to also function as a space suit in extreme environments”

“So it looks classic, but it's state of the art on the inside, huh. No matter, send the mobile weapons out front!”

The special forces of course had data on the Blue Knight, and they identified the armor Koutarou was wearing right away. They were of course well aware of its performance. As it was used by royalty, its specs were high, but weaker than normal because of its antique design taking priority. So overall it shouldn't be that different from the power suit the military used, so Koutarou on his own was hardly a threat. They should be able to win if they have the mobile weapons deal with him.

“... I thought I taught your predecessors not to judge your opponent by their appearance”

Koutarou unsheathed Signaltin and Saguratin hanging off his waist, and held one in each hand.

“Warning. Enemy mobile weapons approaching, detected lock-ons. Estimated the scale of the attack from the energy reaction. Chance of defeat is estimated at 64%. Activating active barrier”

“I'll leave the soldiers and defense to you. I'll deal with the big ones”

“Strategy algorithms are recommending an immediate withdrawal”

“We've worked together for quite a while now. It's about time you understood what I'm planning on doing”

“This main system will pray for your fortune and glory in the place of the nation of Forthorthe”

“Well said, that's more like it!”

Obedying Koutarou's order, GOL changed the aim of the laser cannon on the right shoulder. It had been giving suppressing fire so that the enemy couldn't advance until now, but it stopped for a moment. Instead it kept a watch on approaching enemies. As Koutarou had moved forward far enough, restraining the forces wouldn't be necessary any more. From now on, GOL's job was simply to protect Koutarou.

“That said... using mobile weapons against an enemy of unknown strength is correct. Though I can't say I like the reliance on pure force”

With a sword still in each hand, Koutarou charged the approaching mobile weapons. In total there were three of them, all just above three meters tall, shaped like a cross between a tank and a plane. Normally it slid above the surface and worked as infantry support, but it could fly in the sky for a short amount of time and act as a plane. Since it didn't carry people on board it was very mobile, and for infantry it was the kind of opponent they least wanted to go up against.

“That guy... he must be an idiot. Just one of those mobile weapons can wipe out an entire platoon of infantrymen, and there are three of them? Or does he have a death wish?”

“It must be because he's ignorant. Lacking knowledge is quite frightening”

The soldiers were dumbfounded as they watched Koutarou charge the mobile weapons without hesitation. That said, there was no way for a human from a planet without any diplomatic relations to Forthorthe to know the power of a weapon he sees for the first time. That's why instead of sneering at him, the special forces felt like it couldn't be helped. However, the truth was that the

special forces were the ones who didn't understand.

“Seriously. I think so too... I'm counting on you two!”

“Go! Blow them away with my Love Love Sanae-chan Sword!!”

”Satomi-kun, I'm maximizing Signaltin's power when you hit!!”

Saguratin began shining golden as Sanae infused it with her spiritual energy, and Signaltin responded to Harumi's will and began glowing silver. The glow on both swords was strong. As they were going up against a machine, neither of them needed to hold back, and they went all out from the start.

“Bertorion, the upper part sticking out from the frame is what's creating the distortion field for that unit”

“That thing, huh!”

Clan who was observing from above, told Koutarou about the mobile weapons weak spot. Koutarou found the spot he was told about and raised his arms upwards in a cross shaped motion.

“Look carefully! This is the opponent you have you defeat!”

Despite a large amount of energy gathering in the swords, the three mobile weapons continued advancing without doing anything. They advanced under the assumption that they were fighting an opponent with primitive weapons. There were some of the special forces that had a bad feeling when they saw the swords glow, but before they could do anything, it happened.

First was Saguratin. Koutarou swung the sword, and the trajectory from the swing created a blade of spiritual energy that spread wide and attacked the three mobile weapons. As Forthorthe barriers couldn't protect against spiritual energy, the attack passed through it and destroyed the barrier generation devices.

Next was Signaltin. Koutarou passed through between the space between the center and right mobile weapon. At that time, Koutarou swung his sword to both sides. Without their barrier, the mobile weapons couldn't block Harumi's instantaneous release of power from Signaltin. And they were easily cut in half like a hot knife through butter.

Finally was the gauntlet built into the left hand of the armor. Koutarou focused Sanae's spiritual energy in Saguratin into the gauntlet and created a powerful electric charge, before unleashing it at the final mobile weapon. The lighting bolt flew into the large hole where its barrier generation device had once been and unleashed its energy, breaking the mobile weapon to pieces.

Those three events happened in a single breath. It was so fast that not a single of the special forces could understand what had happened. To them it looked like after Koutarou swung his swords, the three mobile weapons were destroyed.

“That's about what you can expect from something that's not Elexis' machines”

After confirming that the mobile weapons were all destroyed, Koutarou faced the special forces again. He didn't have a single scratch and his polished blue armor was being lit up by the flames of the destroyed mobile weapons.

Of course, the mobile weapons weren't silently waiting for Koutarou to attack. Once they were close enough they began their attack with their standard anti-infantry weapons, heavy machine guns. However, unable to keep with Koutarou's sudden acceleration, only a few of the bullets hit. And those that barely hit were unable to pierce the barrier formed from multiple different powers, and were easily deflected.

In order to defeat Koutarou, anti-mobile weapons weaponry was required. But the three mobile weapons were destroyed by Koutarou before they could notice.

“Who the hell is he!?”

”What just happened!?”

”Why are the mobile weapons destroyed!?”

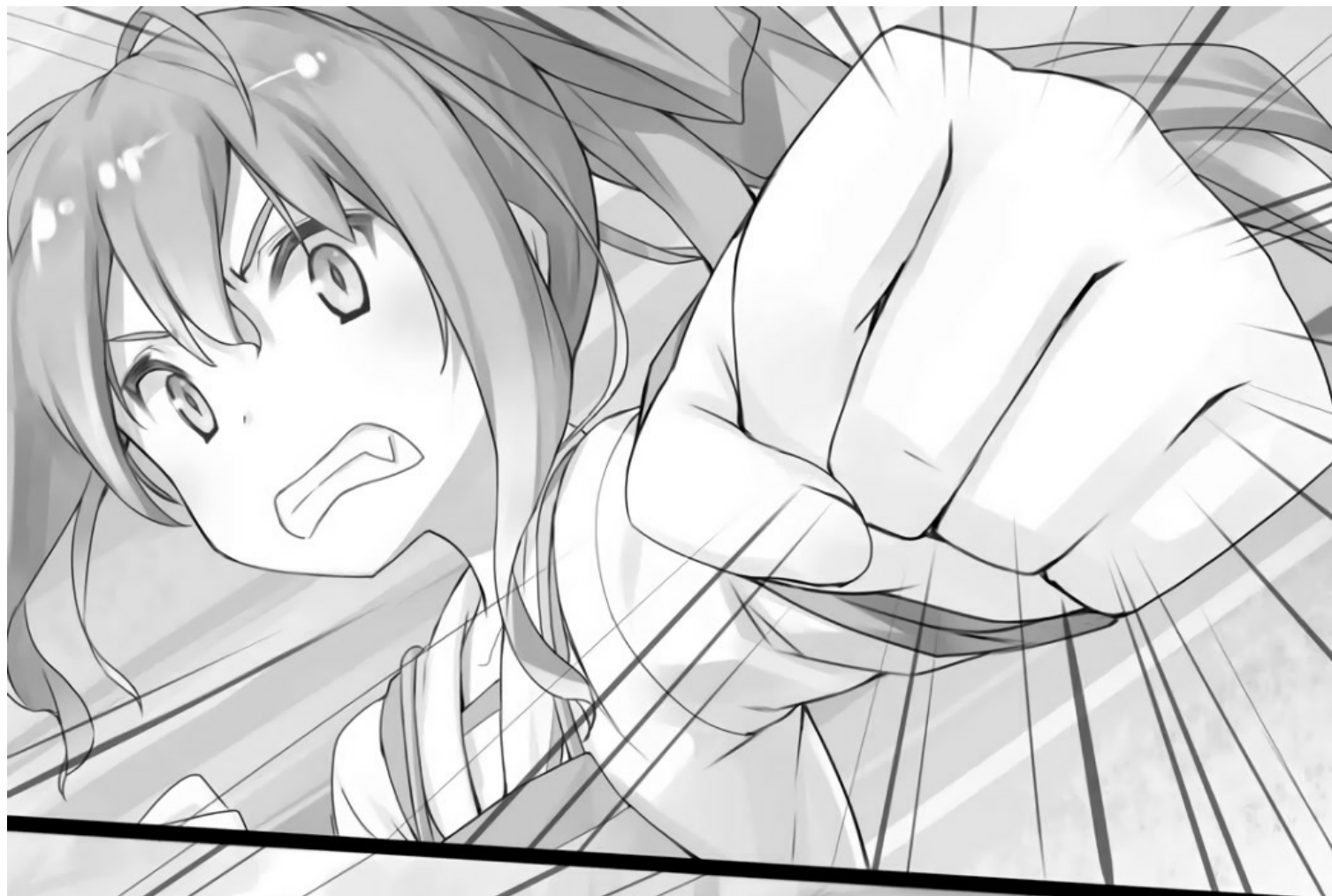
This astonished the special forces. The ability to destroy three mobile weapons without difficulty meant that the knight before them had more than enough power to easily defeat three infantry platoons in an instant. What's even worse was that they didn't even have enough men for a single platoon. A mere 30 men out of the 40 required for a platoon.

“C-Calm down, no matter how strong he is, he is just human! He'll go down from a single bullet!!”

“The commander is right! Calm down and remember your training!”

”It's not like we've only trained fighting against weaker opponents!!”

Suppressing his own panic, the commander encouraged his subordinates. With the help of the vice-commander and squad leader, the panic in their ranks began settling. However, their misfortune had only just begun.



“That might be true if it was just Satomi-kun on his own”

”Eh!?”

A fist entered the view of the commander who just finished scolding his subordinates. It was a girl's fist, but in contrast to its lovely appearance, it smashed in the commander's face with a frightening amount of momentum, and just for the moment the fist collided with the commander's face, it increased in weight, giving off an impact like being whacked by a large hammer.

“Gah”

”C-Commander!?”

Being surprised by an attack like that, the commander never stood a chance. He easily lost consciousness as he was sent flying and crashing into the ground. That vivid blow astonished everyone who saw it. Including the person who threw the punch.

“Uncle, that was too much!! Didn't he die from that!?”

”Don't worry, I held back so he's still alive. Well... he might have broken a few bones”

Shizuka was the one that punched the commander. While Koutarou was attracting the special forces' attention, Shizuka closed in on them and launched a surprise attack. Normally, a girl ambushing a special forces unit with her bare fists was just suicidal, but fortunately or perhaps not, the girl was not normal. Thanks to the powers of the Fire Dragon Emperor Alunaya, her combat capabilities were on par or above that of a mobile weapon. Shizuka couldn't be harmed by their weapons, and they couldn't block her attacks.

“The commander is down! Counter attack!”

“Fire! Fire!!”

“You brat!!”

Shizuka's surprise attack didn't shake up the special forces as much as Koutarou did. Being technologically advanced, Forthorthe had several small or hard to identify weapons, so the special forces assumed that Shizuka was just using one of those. That's why they pointed their guns at Shizuka and counter

attacked like they had trained.

A rapid series of bangs.

“Woah, Uncle, I'm seriously relying on you for defense, okay?”

“Don't worry, I will definitely protect you”

Shizuka was under attack by a dozen or so people, and the roaring sound made it feel like she was inside a thundercloud. Though she was being protected by the Fire Dragon Emperor's powers, she didn't like being shot by guns. Apart from her powers, Shizuka was just a normal girl. However, she wasn't alone. She had companions to lighten her load.

“Ane-san, I'm in position Ho-!”

“Shizuka, we will give you covering fire. Rest easy and fight as you like”

“Kiriha-san! Thank you!”

After thanking the voice from the comms device, beams came raining down from above. The beams were mostly aimed at the enemies behind Shizuka, and made them faint. These were Kiriha's and Korama's attacks.

The spiritual energy beams that Kiriha fired reflected off of Korama's Spiritual Energy Field and assaulted the soldiers. Using this method, Kiriha could stay in a safe spot, and Korama who was reflecting the beams was clad in the Spiritual Energy Field and wouldn't have to worry about a counter attack. Moreover, firing from above meant that there was no need to worry about the position of allies or the geographical features of the area. To the special forces, they were simply being attacked from above by an opponent they couldn't see and fainted without being able to do anything.

“Harumi, we can't lose either!”

“Yes, let's do our best!”

Sanae and Harumi joined in to attack as well. There had been more than the first three mobile weapons, but they had already been eliminated by Koutarou. As a result, the two could move freely. With Sanae's random attacks and Harumi's magic joining the fray, the special forces dropped in numbers quickly.

“... T-This power... just who are you guys...?”

The last one standing was the vice-commander. With trembling hands he pointed the barrel of his weapon at Koutarou and instinctively asked that question. He couldn't help but ask.

One boy and four girls had easily dispatched of 30 special forces and six mobile weapons protecting them. Despite it happening before his eyes, the vice-commander couldn't believe it. To him it made more sense for this to all be an illusion.

“We're—”

Koutarou hesitated how to answer for a moment. Theia's friends felt like it was right. But in this situation there was a more apt response.

“—We're an organization formed under the name of princess Theiamillis. The Satomi band of knights”

“The Satomi... band of knights...?”

“Yes. Though I don't know if you could call us an official band of knights or not”

After hearing that, the vice-commander was knocked out by Koutarou. He and the rest of the special forces would later return to their fleet and report on the details of what happened, and the mysterious band of knights, the Satomi band of knights would be left on Forthorthe's records.

The first official record of the Satomi band of knights was an overwhelming victory with 0 casualties on either side. In future generations this would be known as the first appearance of the legendary band of knights known as Theiamillis' band of blue knights.

Part 7

In total 45 men had attacked the People of the Earth base. 15 men in charge of diversion from the north, and 30 from the southeast. Koutarou and the others had successfully captured all of them.

After a minor skirmish, the 15 on the north side accepted their defeat and surrendered. The 30 to the southeast resisted until the last man, but were all defeated. Currently all 45 were captives and held in a room onboard the Blue Knight. They weren't criminals, but taking them with them was dangerous so they would eventually be freed.

"I'm glad everything ended without any problems"

Yurika had been with Elfaria on the bridge the entire time. Once she heard that everything had ended safely from Koutarou and the others who all gathered, she showed a big smile. She would fight when she had to, but since her personality was fundamentally incompatible with it, she was happy to hear that both friend and foe were safe.

"You were just watching so it was easy for you"

"But, but, if I had a chance to shine that would mean that Sanae-chan and the others would fail"

"Isn't it great that you didn't have to do anything, Yurika!"

"That's right. Nothing happening is the best"

In the end, Yurika only drank tea together with Elfaria, but nobody complained about that. They all felt the same way deep down inside.

"So Theia, what do we do now?"

"If we laze around here any more, the enemy will attack again. We'll give up on resupplying here and leave as quickly as we can"

However, there was no time to feel relieved. While they had safely repelled the special forces, the fleet from Forthorthe was still present. If they casually continued to resupply, there would be another attack from another squad. So Theia decided to stop with their resupplies there and depart right away.

“Give up? Are there enough supplies?”

However, if they departed without enough supplies, there would be no point. That's what Koutarou was worried about.

“Enough or not, even if we continue resupplying, the enemy will show up again before long. We can't resupply any longer”

”Pardomshiha, how much has been resupplied?”

“Just under 80%”

“Then there shouldn't be any problems when we add it in with the Hazy Moon's supplies”

Fortunately, the Blue Knight was roughly 80% done with its resupplying. Combined with the Hazy Moon's supplies, there should be enough. Koutarou wouldn't need to worry.

“I understand, let's depart right away”

Elfaria agreed with Theia. However, there was still something they had to do. There was one more passenger they needed to pick up before heading to Forthorthe.

“Yurika, could you bring Nana here?”

”Okay, I'll be right back”

Accepting Theia's request, Yurika jumped out the gate on the bridge of the Blue Knight. Nana would also be accompanying them for the trip to Forthorthe. She was currently getting maintenance on her artificial limbs on the People of the Earth base. She had just been in a major battle and was about to leave on a long journey, so she was receiving thorough maintenance just in case. But since they were departing right away, they had to call for her. It looked like the continuation of her maintenance would be held on the Blue Knight.

Thus Koutarou and the others decided to leave for Forthorthe right away, but

that presented its own problems, which Harumi pointed out.

“But... even if we depart, that fleet is near Earth isn't it? Can we really leave quietly?”

Harumi was worried if they could really avoid a battle. The fleet that had come to Earth was less than 1% of Forthorthe's ships. Even if they were to fight there would be no end, and they'd surely run out of supplies. That's why they had to avoid fighting as much as possible, but that too was difficult. This was a problem with warp navigation.

Heading to Forthorthe from Earth, they would need to warp several times. Warping used gravity to bend space to bring the current location and destination closer and forcibly opening a hole to cut through. This made it easy to affect with other gravitational fields and the influence on its surroundings was significant as well. At short distances it was possible to cancel that influence out, but it wouldn't work on longer distances. That's why they wanted to avoid warping out near Earth. That meant that they would need to properly distance themselves from Earth before warping, but it was hard to imagine that the enemy fleet would allow it. It was very likely that they would be found while moving and get attacked.

“The fleet consists of six ships. If Reios-sama controls the ship, it's still winnable”

Koutarou and the others already knew the size of the enemy forces. Combining the powers of the Blue Knight and the Hazy Moon, they could guarantee a victory. They had two royal-class battleships that normally served as the flag ships on large fleets, so they have an overwhelming combat capability.

“Wait, Elle. That would be bad for Clan. If things turn out poorly, she won't have a place to return to”

Clan wasn't officially on Earth, and her Schweiger family were rivals with Theia's Mastir family. Moreover, the Schweiger family was deeply connected to the military. If Clan were to side with Theia and Elfaria, it wouldn't just affect her, but her family as well. Not only would she become a wanted fugitive, but she might be cut out off the Schweiger family, or the family's existence itself might be threatened. Koutarou didn't want to put Clan in a dangerous position like

that, and while Schweiger and Mastir might be rivals, they were still royalty. Koutarou wanted to avoid involving Clan and the Schweiger family in any strange troubles.

“Now isn't the time to be talking about that. We will be fighting against the imperial army, no, the coup d'état army from now on, right? You shouldn't have any room to worry about me”

However, Clan clearly shook her head. Her eyes and expression were sterner than normal. As she was royalty, and because of her own pride, this wasn't something she could just run away from.

“Even if the war is won, if you're left on your own, I'd feel terrible”

“I'm not alone anymore. I have you and Theiamillis-san and the others. No?”

“That's true, but...”

“Or... did you already forget that promise?”

“A promise... we did make one, didn't we.... hmm...”

Koutarou recalled the promise Clan was talking about. In the past, he had promised her that if she ever lost a place to call home, he would let her live in room 106. Back then they were protecting the citizens of Forthorthe against the coup d'état army as well. The situation was the same as now. That's why Clan had no hesitation what so ever. When faced with those clear eyes, Koutarou couldn't find any words for a rebuttal.

“Clan-dono, try not to bully Koutarou that much”

That was when Kiriha lent a helping hand to Koutarou who was at a loss for words. She continued talking with a special smile she only showed these two.

“Koutarou doesn't want you to separate yourselves from your family. At least not until there is no other choice”

“Kii...”

Clan turned her tone down a little. Clan was well aware of Koutarou's and Kiriha's family situation.

“Besides, it's not determined that we have to fight yet”

“Really, Kiriha!? What should we do!?”

”We'll make full use of Clan not officially being here”

Kiriha returned to her usual wicked smile and began explaining the plan to escape from Earth.

Not having expected to suffer a disastrous defeat on the surface, the top management on the fleet fell into chaos. Not only was their diversion and surprise attack completely seen through, but they couldn't defeat a single enemy. Moreover, their opponents were less than ten girls. It's only obvious they'd feel confused.

“Calm down!”

”But Admiral”

“No matter how strong their soldiers are, that doesn't make the Blue Knight stronger! All will be fine as long as we don't let them escape!”

But with the Admiral scolding them, the confusion started to vanish. Regardless of how strong the enemy was, that didn't matter once they were on board the Blue Knight. According to the information from Forthorthe, the Blue Knight was more powerful than its recorded specs, but in the end it was just a machine. There was a limit to its strength.

“I apologize for losing my grip... so Admiral, what do we do now?”

”To begin with, we will continue observing the Blue Knight”

The Admiral's powerful voice reverberated through the bridge of the carrier. His determined tone let everyone sense his strong will. That made the soldiers more positive and allowed them to recover from their defeat on the surface.

“We're not doing anything? But wouldn't we give the Blue Knight a chance to launch the first strike?”

The carrier's captain was worried that the Blue Knight would attack when they casually continued to observe the situation. The carrier was the slowest ship in the fleet, and the prime target of an enemy attack. It was an occupational sickness of his to pay attention to any signs of an attack.

“Neither we or them want to set anything off on the Earth orbit”

Neither side wanted to fight in the orbit of a planet they had no diplomatic relationship with. Just placing a military fleet in orbit without permission could already be interpreted as an act of aggression. But a battle in orbit would remove any legitimacy in the eyes of the public, and that was true for the Elfaria side as well.

The only exception would be a short decisive battle on the far side of the moon, but that kind of situation required an unspoken agreement between both sides. That's why the carrier captain had no need to worry.

“We have the advantage of time on our side”

“Indeed, we don't have to make move, but they need to make a move sooner or later after all”

“They should want to avoid battle and enter warp. In that case they would need to leave Earth orbit or go to the far side of the moon. We will only get in the way to keep them from doing that”

In order to warp away, the Blue Knight would need to leave Earth, and the fastest way would be to do so from the far side of the moon. Doing it from anywhere else would require them to get further away. So the Admiral would place the fleet on an orbit slightly further out than the Blue Knight and once the Blue Knight made its move, they would block the path.

“Admiral, the Blue Knight has made its move!”

“Chase after them right away! ... They've made their move sooner than I thought. So they're planning on departing before we can get into a more advantageous position, huh. Smart and swift. It seems like they have a competent commander or advisor on their side”

“The Blue Knight has deployed a stealth field”

“They're being chased by our allies, so they won't be able to escape with just that. Which means, they'll duck behind Earth for a moment. Alright, full power to engines! Don't lose them!”

Like Clan's Hazy Moon, the Blue Knight also had a stealth function to avoid pursuit. However, it wasn't as advanced as the Hazy Moon's, and with careful analysis it was possible to track the traces they left behind. Moreover, the coup

d'état army had information on the Blue Knight, making it even easier to track.

The problem was that if they lose sight of the Blue Knight for a moment, it would be difficult to pick the trace of the ship in the wide space again. That's why the Admiral assumed that the Blue Knight would use the Earth as a shield to hide for a moment. And his reasoning proved correct. The trace of the Blue Knight trailed the exact trajectory he expected and flew around the Earth.

“Send the destroyers forward! They don't have to attack, just don't lose them!”

Like with normal vehicles, the bigger the vehicle the slower it was to accelerate. As the Blue Knight was designed for royalty to ride it was often targeted by the enemy, and was therefore created as high-performance as possible. But even then, it's size had an effect, and a destroyer had better acceleration. That's why as long as the destroyers were sent forward, they wouldn't lose sight of the Blue Knight.

“The Blue Knight is entering the shadow of the Earth”

“And the destroyers?”

“They made it in time. They're continuing observation”

As the Blue Knight entered the Earth's shadow, the carrier the Admiral and the others were onboard couldn't observe the ship any further from its current position. However, having the two destroyers proceed ahead kept them from losing the Blue Knight.

“Send the destroyers in front of the Blue Knight. Push them back and don't let them leave the planet. I'll repeat again, do not let them attack

“Understood, I'll have—”

That was when the expression of the operator carrying out the Admiral's orders changed.

“—A-A-Admiral! We've detected a space-time distortion on the far side of the moon!! The pattern matches the Blue Knight!!”

The operator reporting in was practically screaming. He himself could barely believe what he was saying.

“Impossible, then what's the Blue Knight we're following!?”

The hologram of the Blue Knight that just entered the shadow of Earth was still being displayed. It's not like it had suddenly moved. There were no reactions to the Blue Knight.

“Message from the destroyers! After close examination, what we believed to be the Blue Knight was actually an information pod!”

“We've been had, the Blue Knight's stealth capabilities were better than we thought!!”

That was when the Admiral realized that they had been tricked. The fleet that had misidentified the information pod as the Blue Knight completely turned their back on the Blue Knight. With that they couldn't stop the ship from escaping. After that, the Blue Knight could leisurely move to an area they could warp out, leaving the 45 captives behind in a lifeboat.

Part 8

The critical portion of the plan was that the coup d'état army didn't know of the existence of Clan's Hazy Moon. So Koutarou and the others used Clan's observation equipment to gather data on the Blue Knight's data when in stealth, and created a decoy that would leave the same trace as that. Making the information look like the Blue Knight was difficult, but making it look like a cloaked Blue Knight that couldn't be physically seen wasn't all that hard.

The Blue Knight, using its stealth, joined up with the Hazy Moon to completely conceal itself using Clan's own developed stealth field, and at the same time the decoy was launched. The coup d'état army fell for the decoy and left the Blue Knight and the Hazy Moon, completely unaware of their existence.

After that it was very simple. Once there was enough distance between them and the fleet, the Blue Knight warped towards Forthorthe on its own. The reason the Hazy Moon didn't come with was because they couldn't hide a warp reaction. That's why the Hazy Moon would warp after the fleet left Earth to chase after the Blue Knight.

“Adults were made to dance on top of the palm of Kii's hand...”

Kiriha had of course been the one that came up with this plan. Making full use of Clan's technology, Kiriha avoided a clash with the fleet and allowed the Blue Knight to escape Earth. At the same time, Clan was kept hidden until the very end. It was an escape on the level of art.

“... No wonder I couldn't win against Theiamillis-san... geez...”

Clan recalled challenging Theia who had Kiriha on her side, and smiled wryly. Thinking back to it, she wondered how she could do something so outrageous.

Gold and Silvery White

Part 1

Monday, November 15

Travelling from Earth to Forthorthe on a normal spaceship would take about a month. The problem was one of accuracy rather than distance.

Earth and Forthorthe were about 10 million light-years apart. Using a navigational computer to navigate the super-long distance, even a margin of error of 1% could put them off their target destination by 100,000 light-years, or about the diameter of the Milky Way Galaxy. In other words, with an error of margin of 1%, you could end up anywhere in the galaxy. In the worst case scenario you could end up in a black hole or a star. The true error of margin was much lower than 1% but even then it was clear that some measures were needed.

So in warp navigation the existence of a vast space with nothing in it became very important. If the error of margin was small enough to arrive in those areas, they could safely warp to them. When travelling between galaxies, the vast distance between them could be used, when inside a galaxy, the space between stars could be used. Once close enough you could aim for a specific solar system. Spaceships used that empty space as stepping stones on their travels. Doing that also made the warp distances smaller and reduced the error of margin. First they travelled 90% of the entire distance, and then 90% of that distance, and then 90% of that distance and so on. As the distance reduced, so did the margin of error.

A normal spaceship would repeat that and eventually reach Forthorthe after a

month. Of course, that wasn't the case for royal-class battleships like the Blue Knight and the Hazy Moon. The margin of error in their navigational computers were extremely small, and the warp drive was extremely accurately made as well. As a result, Koutarou and the others would reach Forthorthe within just ten days.

After entering a long warp, everything became very peaceful. The longer the distance, the bigger the error of margin, so even if the enemy used the same route, chances of them appearing at the same place was next to none. But that also meant it would become difficult to group up with allies. And because of that, Koutarou and the others didn't regroup with Clan until the eighth day after leaving Earth.

“... You better not have returned to a sloppy lifestyle while I wasn't looking”

”I haven't had the time to as I've been frozen like we decided on before leaving”

Koutarou and the others felt like only half a day had passed since they left Earth. That was because they had slowed time onboard the ship like Koutarou and Clan had done when they were returning from the past. It was an important technology often used during their long distance travels through space.

“Satomi-kun, why don't you be honest with her and say that you were worried”

“A-Aika-san!?”

”Is that true, Maki!?”

”Yes. Clan-san's... uhm, Hazy Moon, was it? Satomi-kun restlessly walked around the bridge until that appeared”

”I see... uhm... I'm sorry for making you worry... Bertorion. I am safe as you can see”

“... I wasn't worried. If you didn't lead a sloppy lifestyle then that's fine”

”Fufu... yes. I am aware”



“Satomi-kun sure is obstinate”

“... Aika-san, you'll pay for this later”

“You're on. I'll keep my forehead waiting”

Only two days remained until they would reach Forthorthe. They should arrive in a few more warps. From this point on, the warp spaces, or empty space, would get narrower, and the chances of them coming across the coup d'etat army would increase. That's why they needed to discuss what to do from now on, and the girls of room 106 had all gathered on the Blue Knight's bridge.

“Now that we're all here... we first need to decide on how to treat Clan”

”Me?”

Theia's first topic was Clan. Not expecting herself to be brought up, Clan's eyes opened wide.

“Yes. You aside, your Schweiger family and my Mastir family have been rivals for generations. If you continue with us, there will eventually be trouble”

Theia wasn't worried about Clan specifically, she was something between friend and family. There was no doubt that Clan thought of Theia and the others as friends. However, Clan had a family as well. Her family surely wouldn't want Clan to cooperate with the Mastir family suspected of being criminals. The same problem as before, or more accurately eighth days ago, was expected to occur again.

“Like I said before, I have made up my resolve. Even if I were to lose a home to return to, I will protect Forthorthe”

Clan's answer didn't change. She was prepared to fight until the end alongside Koutarou and Theia. Clan too was a proud royalty of Forthorthe. She couldn't surrender to someone trying to change the world through power.

“But Clan. Your place to fight might not be here”

“Bertorion?”

“It might be more advantageous if you're within the Schweiger family rather than fighting alongside us”

As the fight before had proven, the enemy not knowing of Clan's existence was a huge help. So if Clan secretly supported Koutarou and the others from within the Schweiger family, it might be even more effective than if she directly supported them.

“You're not just saying that to return me to my family, are you!?”

“I can't say that's not part of it. But we would obviously get an advantage, and even if we were to lose, if you become the empress, we can avoid the worst case scenario”

The military's first objective was to install a puppet regime, from there, they would then end the imperial rule and have Lord Bandarion rule as a dictator, though obviously not on the surface. Even if Koutarou and the others were to lose, Clan could pretend to go along with the scheme and then temporarily stall Lord Bandarion's plans. Returning Clan to her family would certainly have a lot of meaning.

“I don't want too! You're telling me to watch from safety as you and Theiamillis-san brave dangers!?”

Clan kicked her chair back as she stood up and refused with a harsh tone.

“That's right. I want you to continue secretly supporting us while preparing for the worst”

”That's not something a Forthorthe royalty would do!!”

Clan was against Koutarou's idea. When faced with a time bomb, she wanted to be disarming the bomb, rather than standing ready with body bags. Rather than preparing for the worst, she wanted to prevent it from happening in the first place. Clan believed that this was what it meant for a royalty to take responsibility.

“Besides, you don't understand anything!! Just how lonely it is to just wait!! Just how hard it is to watch a fight from afar!!”

Clan couldn't accept it not just because of her responsibility as royalty, but also on a personal level. Clan would often be supporting, rather than fighting directly, and she was already finding herself praying for the others to return safely a lot. She now understood how Alaia felt when she saw Koutarou off before a battle.

Imagining how it would feel returning to the Schweiger family and separating from Koutarou and the others, being unable to do anything but wait, Clan couldn't help but want to at least want to stay close.

“If you don't need me then just say so!! Leaving me out like this is too much!! And... if you do need me, then please let me stay by your side!!”

Clan had tears in her eyes as she showed her determination. Her emotions were intense and painful and might even be mistaken for a declaration of love, no, in the bigger picture it was without a doubt a declaration of love. A declaration of love to the people of Forthorthe and to her friends gathered here.

“See Reios-sama, it's just like I said”

“... Haah, guess it can't be helped...”

Seeing Clan's reaction, Elfaria flashed a proud smile, while Koutarou dropped his shoulders with a sigh. Clan was confused by their reaction.

“Bertorion? What are you talking about?”

Clan blinked in confusion as the tears in her eyes spilled out. As Koutarou had his back turned on Clan, Theia explained in his place.

“Actually, since we had some time before we would group up with you, we were discussing your treatment between us. That's when mother said, that you will choose the correct decision as a princess and as our friend”

“Elfaria-san...”

Surprised, Clan looked to Elfaria. Elfaria's smile turned gentle and she nodded at Clan.

“And Clan, you feeling that way is because of your long journey with Koutarou, isn't it?”

“Hmm... yes. If not, I would still be immature even now”

“So we threatened Koutarou who was still reluctant. He has to take the responsibility for making you a splendid princess, or the rest of us will all do something drastic”

“My...”

This time Clan turned to Koutarou. He still had his back turned on her. With Theia's explanation, she could tell why Koutarou was doing that. They had journeyed together for a long time after all.

“Then Bertorion was aware from the start?”

“That's right. Knowing what your answer would be he chose to ask anyways. He felt like he had to confirm your determination”

”I see...”

Clan wiped away her tears and stared at Koutarou's back. She wanted to run up to him and hug that back, and complain about him acting so cold despite knowing. However, Clan chose not to do so. Clan was obstinate, and she didn't have to do that to convey her feelings to Koutarou.

“Master, regardless of the details up until now, I believe there is something you need to say to Clan-sama”

As Clan imagined, Koutarou noticed her feelings. That's why he made up his mind as Ruth urged him. Though he still had his back turned.

“... Clan”

”Yes”

”Be my attendant like before... I need you”

”Fufufu, you're the attendant. When are you going to get that, you neanderthal... fufufufu...”

Clan responded in a way she would have during their travels in the past Forthorthe. It was an expression of will of someone who would serve as his partner even now. However, unlike those 2,000 years ago she was filled with warm feelings.

Part 2

After continued discussion, it was decided that Clan would disguise herself and hide her identity, serving as Koutarou's attendant. Being an attendant from Earth, it wasn't unnatural if her identity couldn't be confirmed. And the preconception that a princess wouldn't serve as a knight's attendant should help protect Clan's identity.

Ever since it was decided that Clan would disguise herself as Koutarou's attendant, she had been sitting on the seat to his right. Koutarou's attendant, partner, advisor, science expert, there were a lot of titles she could go under, but Clan believed that the seat next to Koutarou belonged to her. Koutarou was still embarrassed, so having Clan sit by his side meant that he didn't have to look at her face. And the rest of the girls of room 106 observed the awkward master and servant with fascination.

“With Clan-dono's treatment decided, let's move on”

However, they were all aware that they had something more important to do. That's why, when Kiriha changed topic, the girls put Koutarou and Clan aside for now. They could bring the two up again during dinner. But now there was a lot of things that needed to be decided.

“With Clan-dono accompanying us, we can push our boundaries a little. We can rely on the Hazy Moon for a great deal”

”Leave it to me. You won't regret it”

Clan accompanying the rest or not would affect the rest of the decisions to come. Clan's own inventions were of course a great help, but the royal-class battleship Hazy Moon's presence would greatly sway the outcome of battles to come.

“Theia-dono, what do you plan to do now?”

Kiriha turned to Theia. She already knew the answer to her question, but for the sake of the discussion, she wanted to let everyone know.

“At first, my plan was to group up with our allies outside of the solar system. It would be easy for the coup d'état army to find us within the solar system after all. But with the Hazy Moon, we can be a bit more bold. Ruth”

“Yes, Your Highness”

Ruth operated her bracelet and displayed a planetary system above the desk the group was sitting around. This system was different from what they would see in a classroom. The sun in the center was the same, but there were eight planets in orbit around it. In the past, people only lived on a single one of those, but now there were people living on all eight. This sun and eight planets was called the Forthorthe solar system. This was the home of Theia and the others, the Holy Forthorthe Galactic Empire.

“Our first destination is here. The sixth planet, Alaia”

At the same time Ruth spoke, the sixth planet from the sun expanded. It was a beautiful blue planet with a ring around it just like Saturn.

“Alaia?”

Hearing that name, Harumi looked at Ruth out of reflex. The name Alaia held a special meaning to her.

“Yes. Originally only our main planet, the third planet from the sun, Forthorthe, could sustain life. The remaining planets have been terraformed to support life, and they have been named after historical figures”

At first the sixth planet was a barren planet, but when compared to the other planets it had a rich environment, making it relatively easy to terraform. That's why it was the first planet to be terraformed. And when people began living on it, it was named after the most famous empress, Alaia. Thus, one could say that the planet Alaia was the sign that Forthorthe had officially entered the space age.

“... I see... what an extraordinary story...”

What would eventually happen in Earth's future was already long past in

Forthorthe. Harumi couldn't help but feel surprised, and Alaia most likely would have felt the same way.

“And Alaia is under direct control of the Mastir family, so Her Majesty, Elfaria still has a lot of support here. That's why the Elfaria faction's base is on this planet as well”

Forthorthe had seven royal families, and each of them had direct control of one of the terraformed planets. Since each of the families developed their own planets, the ties between the residents and the ruling family was deep. As a result, even after Elfaria's crimes began being broadcast on Alaia, her approval ratings barely dropped at all. This meant it was easy for the Elfaria faction to move around on the planet, and it was also why they built their secret base on the planet.

“We'll head to that base and group up with our allies”

Theia and Elfaria were going to use the information their allies had gathered to expose Lord Bandarion's conspiracy. For that sake, going to their allies largest base was the best way to do so. Currently, there were very few bases that the Elfaria faction could openly use. Out of the new secret bases prepared, the one on Alaia was the largest. Moreover, it was far away from the star, making it easier for Theia and the others to access.

“However, there is just one big problem with this. That is how we get down to the surface without being found by the coup d'etat army”

“There won't be any problems getting to Alaia's atmosphere. My Hazy Moon should be able to approach without being found. The problem is how to proceed from there. While it's not as expansive as the main planet, there are still air defenses as people live on the planet. It will be virtually impossible to descend to the surface without being found”

Not even the Hazy Moon was able to erase its trace completely. The heat and light from re-entry stood out too much to be hidden. Moreover, space distortion through gates or warps were difficult to completely conceal.

As a result, trying to breach the front with a re-entry would get detected, as would both the entrance and exit points in any attempted gates or warps. While it was easy to say, actually getting down to the surface without being detected in

this day and age was difficult.

“In anime and stuff, people would stow away on ships or blend in on a train to cross the borders”

Sanae, who was actually listening for a change showed off what little knowledge she had. But the idea of stowing away wasn't a bad one. That was how Theia and Ruth had slipped into Forthorthe when they went to rescue Elfaria.

“In the past it would have been possible, but they are on guard now. On pretext we are felons, and we have a space battleship. Some special method will be required no matter what”

However, the situation had changed from before. Officially, Theia and the others plus the Elfaria faction were treated as terrorists riding around a battleship. Following the manual on countering terrorism, the security around the Forthorthe system had gotten stronger. But even then, they might be able to do something with the abilities of the girls of room 106, but with so many uncertain elements, entering as stowaways would be used as a last resort.

“Yurika-chan, if you give it your all, how far can you teleport?”

Nana turned to Yurika. Hearing the words special method, her first idea was to break through with magic. Being a former magical girl, she knew how to make effective use of magic, and teleportation was the first candidate.

“... Let's see... using a ceremony while we're moving will be impossible, so... if I stretch the incantation time as long as possible, and use a lot of magical power... uhm, I think I can manage ten kilometers”

“Ten kilometers wouldn't be enough. We'd need 100 at the very least”

Sadly, it seemed like breaking through the atmosphere with a teleport would be difficult. If Yurika alone was ten kilometers, they'd only get some 30-40 kilometers even if Nana; Maki and Harumi all helped out. Even if it was possible, the deceleration was a big problem. If she simply teleported in with the same velocity as she had during re-entry and crashed into the ground, only a big red stain in Yurika's shape would remain. Moreover, even with magic, they were still bending space, so it was still possible they might get detected.

“... I think you should be a little more surprised that a human can warp ten kilometers without the aid of science, Theiamillis-san”

“In that case, it's Uncle's time to shine”

---“Indeed, I can descend normally. I've done it several times before”

Another candidate was the Fire Dragon Emperor, Alunaya. In his case, he could return to his dragon form and re-enter the atmosphere. Since it wasn't bending space, there was no worry about being detected.

---“But prepare for your weight to increase quite a bit”

“It can't be helped, I'll give up this time. Do it, Uncle”

“A human that can warp and a creature that can enter the atmosphere from space... hearing it again, it really is ridiculous”

“But Your Highness, even if we were to borrow Alunaya-sama's back, there is still a chance that we'll be spotted visually or by radar”

Ruth's point was very correct. Alunaya was over 20 meters in size, and he'd stand out quite a bit because of the heat and light formed from re-entry. Moreover, there was also a high chance of being caught on simple radar.

“Indeed, that is a problem”

“In regards to that problem, we should be able to use this”

Kiriha pointed to the hologram of the Forthorthe solar system still being projected. The hologram was currently showing the glowing blue planet Alaia, and the ring around it.

Part 3

Alaia had a ring like the one Saturn has. The ring consisted of ice with some dust and rock mixed in, like the one on Saturn. At times some pieces in the ring would fall to Alaia. Kiriha's plan was to blend in with the falling pieces and enter the atmosphere. However, there was a big problem with that method. That method was the mechanisms put in place to protect the planet from any damage from falling pieces of rock and ice.

Most of the ice burned away at re-entry. As it was primarily ice with some dust and rocks mixed in, the ice melted as it entered the atmosphere. But in the case of a large clump of ice, it would reach the surface and cause a lot of damage. So there were a lot of satellites that detected lumps of ice larger than a certain size and neutralized them with laser. That's why there was a high chance of being attacked by lasers when trying to sneak in with the falling pieces of the ring. In order to avoid this, some tricks were required.

The method that Clan and Kiriha thought of to break through the defense system was to give a small spaceship a coating of radar absorbing paint. Even then, the space ship wasn't designed with stealth in mind so it would not be completely hidden from radar. However, it was possible to make it look smaller. As they would blend in with the falling ice, there was no need to completely hide. After that all they needed to do was cut the power and fall towards Alaia with the gravitational pull and they should be able to slip past the defenses installed. Once they entered the atmosphere Alunaya would use his magical power to protect the spaceship from the heat and safely land them on the surface. As their movement was based on gravity, it would take some time, but this was the method of descent that had the highest chances to succeed.

The small spaceship that would used to descend was the haniwas heavy combat module, O-hime. As O-hime was additional equipment for the haniwas, it was made to be able to function in all the same places as they could. They were

of course no match for a ship specialized for space or water travelling, but in situations where anything could happen, O-hime's adaptability was a big weapon.



Part 4

Playing a leading part in the descent, Karama and Korama took the lead and helped remodel the O-hime. Though by remodeling, all they were doing was adding covers to make it look like a lump of ice and giving painting it in radar absorbing paint.

"Hey! The paint on the starboard side is thin Ho-! What are you doing Ho-!"

"I'm sorry, I'm so sorry, I'll repaint it right away!"

"As expected of Harumi-chan, Ho. The finish is very nicely done"

"I am honored by your praise"

"I'd like Harumi-chan to do the starboard side too Ho-"

"I'm painting it, I'm properly painting it!"

Theia was idly watching out the progress of the work. She was staring at the O-hime being remodeled but her mind was somewhere else. She was thinking of the far away future.

---In the end, all I can do is fight, huh... I haven't matured at all...

When Theia first headed to Earth, she was planning on using force to shut up the aboriginal inhabitants and obtain control of room 106. However, she failed and after maturing over a long period of time, she realized that it was a mistake. Yet as she returned to Forthorthe, she was preparing for battle. While she realized it couldn't be helped, she felt like she hadn't matured a little.

---But this time I'm not just getting Ruth involved, but many important people... I might be lacking a fundamental quality as a ruler...

Ruth was a Forthorthe born knight, so she due to her position she had a reason to fight. However, her other friends didn't. They had all come at Theia's request. While they had special powers, it still didn't change that she had brought her

friends into a fight that they had nothing to do with. Of course, they would say that they do have something to do, but that wouldn't make Theia feel any better.

“Ei”

That was when an acute pain struck Theia's head.

“Ow!? W-What are you doing!?”

Since it hurt quite a bit, Theia complained with tears in her eyes. Looking in the direction of the attack, Theia spotted Koutarou who had just swung his fist.

“What, I was just punching you”

“That's not what I was asking! I was asking why are you punching me!?”

“There's no reason”

“Don't hit people for no reason!”

“More accurately, it's because you're Theia”

Everyone understood how Theia felt. They had all, more or less, felt the same way during their own troubles. No one here enjoyed putting their friends in danger. But when trying to tell each other not to worry, it was hard to get it across. So there, the girls sent out Koutarou. He was the only one that could communicate with Theia without words.

“Because you're Theia, I will hit you without reason”

“Then that means I can hit you right back!!”

Theia swung her fist at Koutarou's stomach. She looked delicate, but the strike born from the full force of Theia's muscles was heavy. Koutarou instinctively stifled his breath.

“Ugh”

You're mine and Ruth's Koutarou after all!!”

“Y-You do get it, Theia!”

“Too naïve! Did you think I was some kind of idiot that would get punched time and time again!”

Koutarou and Theia began an all out fist fight. However because of the flow of offense and defense, the need to restrict the opponent's attacks appeared and the fight shifted to joint locks.

“U-Using your, brute force, like thaat!!”

”If your, citizens, saw your face, they'd be, disappointed!!”

Theia swiftly moved behind Koutarou and wrapped her thin arms around his neck. Koutarou wasn't about to let that happen and used his strength to try and tear her off. When it came to technique Theia was on top and when it came to strength it was Koutarou, the fight moved back and forth between the two.

---But... why did Koutarou do something like this...?

Being the one pressuring Koutarou with a technique, Theia had some breathing room. That's why she mercilessly pressured Koutarou with her body while she began thinking of the reason behind Koutarou's actions with her mind. He had surely done it to comfort her. Koutarou would often use violence on someone making a dark expression to change the situation into one where they didn't have the ability to continue thinking. However, Theia believed that this time, that wasn't the case.

---Koutarou said 'you do get it'. In other words, that was his intention.

This time, Koutarou's intentions were deeper than normal. That's what Theia felt from his actions.

---Because I am Theia, and he is Koutarou. He punched me to remind me, to make me understand, to make me realize. Which means, that in other words...

A few minutes after the two had been fighting. Theia finally arrived at the answer to what Koutarou was trying to convey.

“... Hm? What is it, Theia?”

The strength in Theia's arms suddenly weakened. Koutarou had been frantically trying to tear those arms away from him, but confused by the sudden loss in strength, he eased up as well and turned to look at her face.

“... It's, nothing...”

Theia was crying. As the power behind her attack had weakened, she was

crying with her arms wrapped around Koutarou's neck.

“I see...”

Koutarou put his hand on Theia's head and lightly tapped it two, three times. Words were unnecessary as what he wanted to tell her had already been conveyed.

“... I just... remembered, that's all...”

Theia increased the strength in her arms again. But this strength was different from before. It was strength to shorten the distance between them.

“... That... me putting you in pain like this, means nothing to you...”

As long as Theia was Theia, Koutarou didn't mind if he was punched or squeezed. The opposite was also true. As long as Koutarou was Koutarou, Theia didn't mind if she was punched or squeezed. They could act like that towards each other as they shared the same hobby and they could rely on one another. Theia was currently very conscious of that.

“...”

Koutarou silently lightly tapped Theia's head again. As expected, he wasn't using words.

“... If you continue on with me, you will only get hurt. You may say that you don't mind, but I don't want that...”

” ...”

“... I didn't want you to be hurt because of me relying on your good will...”

” ...”

Koutarou tapped Theia's head once more. But this time he kept his hand on her head and moved it left and right, patting her head.

“... But, I can rely on you right... after all... you don't mind being hurt by me...”

” ...”

Koutarou continued patting Theia's head without a word. That seemed to convey his feelings though as Theia held onto him harder. After confirming the answer that Theia had reached, Koutarou finally spoke.

“You always thought like that yourself right? You didn't care if you got hurt after getting involved in anyone else's troubles”

“ ... ”

But now Theia fell silent instead. Or more accurately, she couldn't form any words because she was sobbing. So she hugged Koutarou even harder in an attempt to convey her feelings.

“To me... I have things I want to treasure, even if it hurts me. I'm sure everyone else feels the same way too... Just like you do”

” .. ”

Eventually Theia pressed her head against Koutarou's shoulders and began crying. Because of that, her cries were quiet and nobody realized that she was crying. Apart from Koutarou that is.

“Still, you really are kind. Even if we feel that way, you'll probably feel painful again”

” ... Mm...”

“When that happens, come to me and I'll punch you. And then you'll be able to remember, just like now. That you yourself fought with that in your mind”

Theia continued to cry. She found her answer, but her conflict was still present. That couldn't be helped as she was just a normal human.

“ ... Can I hit you too...?”

“Stupid, of course you can”

” ... Mm...”

With that as their final words, the two stopped speaking. From that point on, Koutarou patted Theia's head while waiting for her to stop crying. However, that time wasn't coming any time soon as she didn't stop crying until an hour had passed.

“ ... Hey, Theia”

Sensing that Theia had stopped crying, he opened his mouth again. There was something he wanted to ask her.

“... What, Koutarou...”

Theia's voice was calm, gentle and sweet. It was a special voice she rarely used. It was the voice she only used with someone who she fully trusted.

“Continuing from before, could you seriously strangle me? I'm embarrassed going back to the others like this”

The others knew that Koutarou and Theia had been alone for about an hour, and they would sometimes anxiously glance at them. Of course, they didn't know what the two were talking about. That's why Koutarou wanted it to look like the topic had derailed and a fight had broken out. It was a worry only boys of age would have.

“You really are hopeless... but now that you mention it, I agree”

“Right?”

“I want to leave our relationship as an radical one”

For now.

Theia would have ended her sentence with that. But she chose not to say it. This was a common stubbornness for a girl her age. Instead she pressed her lips on Koutarou's cheeks, very gently, so Koutarou wouldn't notice. It was a vow for her own sake.

“Then let's go. Are you ready?”

”Wait, wait, how did it I go?”

“You gripped my right hand”

”Right, now I remember”

Thus the two began fighting again. It was as intense as always, but only on the surface. The girls that were watching over the two had noticed, but had no intentions of pointing it out, because they knew that by not doing that, everything would work out in the end.

Part 5

With the haniwas help, by the time Koutarou and the others reached the ring around Alaia, O-hime's preparations were complete. Moreover, they also managed to get in touch with their contact person in the Elfaria faction, and were able to get details about the surface and about the planet Forthorthe.

“... And that's the situation, just like you believe, we too believe that you should avoid stowing yourselves away, Your Highness. The security is a lot stricter than before, and we're still looking for an opening in it”

“In the end, stowing ourselves away is a huge risk, and it would probably end up in a failure somewhere along the way”

“That's why we agree with the plan of descending to the planet alongside the ice of the ring”

“Okay, I got it. Let the ones below know to be prepared to meet up with us”

“Understood”

According to the contact person, the entirety of Forthorthe was becoming more advantageous for the coup d'état army. The media under the coup d'état army's control continued to slander Elfaria, even though the rest of the media were discussing the pros and cons, the overall tone of Elfaria was negative. The feelings of the citizens were being affected by that, and her former high level of support was the only reason a discussion around her was still going on. But eventually, the citizens would be overcome by the media's negative tone of discussion, so swift measures were required.

Fortunately, even in that situation, the citizens on Alaia still supported Elfaria. Based on historical events, the Mastir family had a high level of support even before, but after going through hardships together during the terraforming of Alaia, the citizens were exceptionally supportive of the Mastir family. As a result, regardless of what the media under the coup d'etat army's control said, the

public opinion on Alaia remained unchanged. And that helped support the activities of the Elfaria faction.

The coup d'état army understood that as well. They wanted to keep Theia and the others from entering Alaia no matter what. Because the citizens would love a story of the empress and a princess chased out by their country, only to return to the planet named after the Silver Princess. That's why security was much stricter than usual, and the entry into the planet was monitored carefully. Because of that, the Elfaria faction agreed that descending to the planet alongside the falling ice from the ring would be a better either.

“Then Your Majesty, Your Highness, I will pray for your safe journey”

”Thank you”

”Excuse me”

Finishing reporting to Theia and the others, the contact person swiftly left the Blue Knight's bridge. His role wasn't just to deliver information to them, but also reporting back to their allies. He couldn't take it too easy.

“... The princess said thank you... fufufu...”

“Ah, he's here, uncle!”

“I've gathered everyone's letters!”

”And here are the pictures of the princess we promised!”

”Leave it to me, I'll make sure to deliver them. In exchange—”

“Yeah, we'll take a lot more pictures. So please deliver more letters!”

”It's a promise”

The contact person had one more important job. That was to deliver letters and messages from the children on the Blue Knight, to their friends and family. When compared to his mission, it might be seen as trifling work, but to them, this was their only connection with their hometown. It was an important job that couldn't be ignored.

Part 6

At around the same time. Lord Bandarion on the planet of Forthorthe was receiving a report from the fleet admiral. He had already received the rough details through hyperspace communications, but since the contents of the report were hard to accept, by the time the fleet returned, the fleet admiral was summoned to give another report.

“... The Satomi band of knights? I've never heard of it”

“If we are to believe the words of their commander, they are a new band of knights approved by princess Theiamillis”

“Their name aside, there's no mistaking their strength is there?”

“Yes. 40 special forces soldiers didn't stand a chance against just nine of them”

Lord Bandarion's first questions were about the enemy's strength and numbers. Anyone would be confused upon hearing that 40 veteran soldiers were defeated by a boy and eight girls. Moreover, the enemy's equipment was already known and out of date. The worst report of all was that a girl in an apron defeated a dozen or so soldiers with her bare hands.

“So the elite special forces were defeated without difficulty... what a pathetic story”

“Bandarion-sama, it would be cruel to blame the soldiers. Since there were 0 deaths, I believe this new band of knights were far stronger”

“Granado... hmm... you are correct. There might be something special about Earth”

However, with the report from the fleet admiral and the documented footage, there was no doubt that it was the truth, and that the enemy was abnormal. Lord Bandarion had been perplexed at first, but he was now accepting it as reality. Ignoring the enemy's strength with some strange excuse would be a

fool's act. It would be better to accept their strength and use excessive force to deal with them. Lord Bandarion had the capacity to accept that. Moreover, he had such an overwhelming difference in forces that allowed him to think like that.

“Then why did you allow the Blue Knight escape?”

The biggest problem for Lord Bandarion was the next event. The strength of an individual didn't matter in a battle between spaceships. And as long as they could come out victorious in a space battle, that individual strength didn't mean a thing.

“Since we had data on the Blue Knight's stealth function we used that to pursue them”

The spaceship, the Blue Knight, had a stealth function that allowed it to erase its traces. However, it couldn't fully erase them, and it would leak a slight amount of specific electrical and gravitational waves. That's why, having accurate data of the leaking traces, it was possible to pursue the cloaked ship.

“However... I don't know when they did it, but before we knew it, we were pursuing the Blue Knight's dummy. During that time, the Blue Knight had fled the other way and entered warp”

By the time the Blue Knight left orbit, it had already activated stealth. But since the fleet had data on when the Blue Knight used stealth, they could pursue it. What's strange was what happened after that. Before they knew it, the Blue Knight had been replaced with an information pod, and the Blue Knight had escaped the opposite direction.

That was because the fleet didn't know about the existence of the Hazy Moon. With not just the Blue Knight, but the Hazy Moon's own developed stealth function, there was no way the fleet could pursue the Blue Knight. So it would be cruel to blame them, but since nobody knew about it, they had no choice but to apologize.

“... How troublesome”

As expected, Lord Bandarion's expression turned harsh. Seeing that, the admiral felt like he was going to get a punishment including demotion. That was

how severe the expression on his face was.

“It seems Her Majesty Elfaria is far tougher than I expected...”

Director-General Granado was the same. In his situation he could guess the technology the opponent had, and felt a clear sense of danger. He began contemplating if he should pull out technology still in the development phase.

“That is true, but there is another thing that is troublesome”

”By which you mean?”

”The troublesome one is that brat, the DKI's young heir”

”Elexis is it”

”I misread the situation. He knew that this would happen when he gave us the information. Trying to sell himself for even more”

”Then DKI already has countermeasures?”

“That's right. That's why he directed us to lose both on the surface and in space. I don't like it, but it seems we have no choice but to cooperate”

If left be, the fleet would only lose in space. However, Elexis had given them information letting them know that a surface battle would be better. If he gave them that information, knowing the strength of the opponents, then that could only mean one thing.

“‘You get it now, right? If you want to beat them, you'll have to team up with me’ is what that brat is saying”

If it was just about defeating Elfaria, it probably wouldn't be that hard. It was possible if they were prepared to sacrifice a lot. But what would the citizens think upon seeing that? With that in mind, it would be difficult for Lord Bandarion to rule afterwards. The solution was to find Elfaria with a small force and resolve the situation right away. And in order to do that, Elexis' power was needed. The power of Elexis, who sent information to them knowing they couldn't win.

“That said... we likely wouldn't have understood if he had just said it out loud”

“That's right, Granado. That's the most irritating point!!”

Bang.

Lord Bandarion punched the desk in frustration. The loud impact alongside his fierce voice echoed through the command room. The overwhelming force behind it made the people within instinctively stop moving, and turn towards Lord Bandarion.

“Brat, I'll admit that you are ahead for now! And that we need your power! But don't think things will stay like that forever! I am Marswell Dayora Bandarion! The man that will become the ruler of Forthorthe!!”

Thus it was decided that Lord Bandarion would team up with Elexis. To Lord Bandarion who had a lot of pride, making that decision was as difficult as drinking molten iron. However, he understood the compensation he would need to pay in order to fulfill his goal. A ruler of might that would do anything to stand on the top of all things. That was the kind of man Marswell Dayora Bandarion was.

Part 7

Koutarou and the others headed towards Alaia a little while after the contact person had left. That was partly because they wanted some time difference between them and the contact person departing, but also because they needed to find some ice that they could make use of. In order to hide O-hime, they needed several of the largest sizes of lumps of ice so that the defenses wouldn't bombard them. If not, chances were that O-hime would get caught up in the bombardment.

Having found the lumps of ice they needed, they headed towards Alaia with them. Time wise, about half a day had passed since the contact person left. They would arrive about another two days after that. It would take that long even with the Hazy Moon taking them as close as possible. In exchange for the time it took, there was practically nothing else to do, as power was reduced to a minimum to avoid detection. As a result, Koutarou and the others would be waiting inside the O-hime for a long time.

"It really helps to calm down with a tatami mat"

"Fufufu, you should thank Sanae-chan's brains for that one"

"You did good"

"Ehe~m"

Shizuka patted Sanae's head, who had thrown herself back on the tatami mat. They were currently in O-hime's residence section in the back. Originally, being a small gunboat, there was no residence division onboard the O-hime, but the rear portion could be changed to match needs. The armaments that had been there had been removed, and instead a residence section had been added. That said, since it was made so quickly, it was very dull, so Sanae had put down some tatami mats without permission to make it somewhat better.

"If only there was a wardrobe it'd be the same as room 106"

“Just settle for that locker”

“It's really hard to sleep standing up you know”

The size of the residence section was about as big as room 106, and came with a big room, lavatory, restroom and kitchen. With the majority of them being girls, the equipment naturally turned out that way.

“Everyone, tea is ready”

”We've got snacks too”

Because of that, for better or for worse, Koutarou and the others were spending time as usual. Ruth and Kiriha had just prepared tea and snacks, and they were all gathered around the tea table in the middle.

“Maki, could you bring me cup?”

“Here you go”

”Thank you”

Though the room was small and there were a lot of people, they cooperated to hand out the tea and snacks in an experienced and familiar fashion. They knew they were in the middle of a dangerous journey, but by doing this, the girls could rest their strained nerves. Origin and powers aside, they were just normal girls, so this kind of time was a positive influence.

“Oh? Where is Sakuraba-senpai?”

Koutarou was handing out tea and snacks with the girls, but that was when he noticed that Harumi was missing.

“We passed by her in the passage a little while ago Ho-”

“She was headed for the cockpit Ho! Not the bats!”

”I see. I'll go get her”

At this rate, Harumi's tea would cool and the snacks would get eaten. Koutarou left the tea and snacks to Ruth and Kiriha and headed towards the cockpit.

Part 8

The stars as seen from the cockpit were very vivid. As there was no air, the stars weren't twinkling. So the stars ended up looking like a picture, and Harumi faintly felt like that was a waste. As she knew that was what they truly looked like, Harumi smiled wryly at her own selfish feelings.

“What are you smiling on your own about, Sakuraba-senpai”

“Satomi-kun... fufufu, actually I was thinking it was a waste that the stars aren't twinkling”

“You're right, you can see them so clearly that there's no romance in it”

Koutarou and Harumi lined up, and stared outside together. Like Harumi said, the stars weren't twinkling in the slightest, which made Koutarou feel like it was a waste as well.

“Sometimes, seeing something vaguely makes it look more beautiful”

“You'll worry about getting wrinkles in another 20 years or so, Sakuraba-senpai”

“Geez, Satomi-kun...”

“When that happens, I'll make sure not to look too closely”

“I'll be fine. I'll rejuvenate myself with magic”

“Everyone will complain, telling you to do it for them too”

“Then I will. Fufufufu”

“Ahahaha”

This place is over 10 million light-years from Earth, inside of a spaceship. Even then, the two were laughing as if they were in the middle of knitting society club activities. Since the two had been in the knitting society just the two of them for so long, whenever they were alone, they would naturally drift towards that kind

of atmosphere.

“You're a romanticist, aren't you, Sakuraba-senpai”

“I'm aware of it. But aren't all girls romanticist compared to boys?”

“Is... that a complaint about me?”

“Yes, just a little. Fufu”

There were times when Harumi found Koutarou's emphasizing the principle of things irritating. He should benefit a lot more if he was more flexible and occasionally emphasized romanticism. But at the same time, not being able to do that was Koutarou's charm. In the end, taking that into account, Harumi felt just a little bit dissatisfied.

“But when it comes to romanticism, I don't think I can beat Theiamillis-san”

”She is really into that after all...”

”In her pursuit of that romance, the Blue Knight, she even turned you into the real Blue Knight after all”

”It really is a confusing story”

”In the end, being a normal girl born on Earth is putting a break on me and I can't fully indulge in the romance”

“Hahaha, that really is just like you, Sakuraba-senpai”

Koutarou laughed happily. The serious and common sense part of Harumi was getting in the way of her expectations and beliefs of something special at the very end. It was a part that was very much like her.

“Fufu... but... right now... everything strangely feels like a dream. It looks like I was actually a girl too”

Harumi gently smiles at Koutarou and looked back outside. Speaking with an underclassman boy in the same society as her. Being the boy she loved, her heart leaped for joy. But as she did that and looked at the spectacle outside of the cockpit, she felt a different emotion mixed in.

“Like a dream? What do you mean?”

”Even though this is the first time I've seen these stars, they feel nostalgic”

This was supposedly the first time Harumi had seen the stars outside the window, but she felt like they were familiar. Like she had looked up at the stars at her home for the first time in a while. And that she had done something like this with Koutarou before.

“Even though there's no way.... fufufu”

“That's probably...”

“Yes, I think so. This is the first time I've seen these stars after all...”

Inside of Harumi was the memories of a certain girl. They were something Harumi had inherited when she inherited her important mission. While they were at a different planet from Forthorthe, the stars still looked the same. The stars before Harumi now were the same as the stars in that girl's memories.

“I do understand that these aren't my memories. That this isn't something I felt myself. But... the feelings about it are similar to my own, so... my heart can't help but feel nostalgia...”

As the two looked up at the stars, Harumi could recall certain memories. They were memories of the two looked up at the starry sky in Forthorthe.

“And I remember the words from back then. And the emotions that couldn't be conveyed...”

The painful feelings of having a clear sense of love, but being unable to convey it and stop Koutarou. As she looked at the stars, those feelings swelled up in Harumi's mind and eventually nostalgia began overtaking it. Tears formed in Harumi's and the stars that shouldn't be twinkling began to shine brilliantly.



“... Back then, this is what you said...”

Entrusting herself to those memories, words floated up from within Harumi. She didn't resist and just naturally let those words flow.

“... 'I came from the other side of that sky, the world of stars'...”

He had a place to return to, a promise to fulfill. It was impossible to stop a knight that emphasized reason. With those words, she had no choice but to give up, they were special words that she could never forget.

“... I could only wait. For the day you would return to Forthorthe... so we could look up at this sky together once more...”

Before Koutarou knew it, Harumi's hair was glowing silver, the color of her eyes had changed to a clear blue, and the tears in her eyes finally began overflowing, wetting her translucent white cheeks.

“It couldn't be...”

Koutarou was at a loss for words. He was completely confused. The girl in front of him should without a doubt have been Harumi. He felt that even now, but at the same time, he felt the presence of a different person.

“... Welcome back, Koutarou-sama... I have forever waited for the day you return to Forthorthe...”

The beautiful hair shining silver, the clear blue eyes, the soft and calm way of standing, and the gentle behavior. While the clothes she was wearing was different, she was exactly like the girl in Koutarou's memories.

“Sakuraba-senpai... or is it... Your Majesty standing there?”

Koutarou couldn't distinguish the two. Is the girl in front of him Harumi, or is it someone else. The way she stood and her behavior shared so many similarities. The only clear differences Koutarou could tell was her hair and eyes.

“Who knows... I can't really tell myself. Is this person Harumi or Alaia... it might even be both. We share one thing that can't be distinguished, because there is no need to...”

Harumi had the memories of Alaia inside of her. Those memories had overwritten the image of princess Alaia that Harumi created for her role in the

plays. That's why Alaia's memories didn't confuse Harumi. Harumi was Harumi and Alaia was Alaia, there was a clear, distinct line separating them.

However, there was one exception. While their birth and growth were different and they had lived completely different lives, that one thing was like an exact replica of one another. And that was their feelings towards one man. That's why when that feeling was elevated to its peak, it was impossible to distinguish the two. Which was why the person standing in front of Koutarou was both Harumi and Alaia. When facing Koutarou alone, that distinction was unnecessary.

“Fufu... I'm happy you are back, Koutarou-sama... I'm sure Charl would be pleased as well”

“... Y-Your Majesty, I... I...!!”

Both of them had a lot they wanted to say. Things they would say if they ever were to meet again. The words they wanted to say were countless, but when the time appeared, not a single of the words came to mind. The event was too sudden, and there was too much to say. The only thing the two could do was look at each other.

“Hey, Koutarou! Harumi! If you don't hurry, you'll run out snacks!”

“Ah...”

And the end arrived just as suddenly. The moment Sanae's voice came from the residence section, Harumi's and Alaia's feelings greatly differed. The glow in her hair dissipated, and her eyes returned to their original color. In just a few seconds, she had returned to the usual Harumi.

“... It's Sakuraba-senpai, right?”

“Yes...”

Harumi nodded sadly and bowed deeply towards Koutarou. She was full of sadness.

“... I'm sorry, Satomi-kun. I wish I could have stayed as Alaia-sama a little longer... but my feelings went out of control...”

Harumi and Alaia could only stay as one as an absolute exception with all the

correct conditions. It was difficult for Harumi to directly control it. Koutarou didn't fully understand the circumstances, but he shook his head at the apologizing Harumi.

“It's fine. You are you, Sakuraba-senpai. You don't have to force yourself to become Her Majesty Alaia. I'm sure Her Highness feels the same way”

Alaia's intentions were clear. While she had allowed Harumi to succeed her duties, she wanted Harumi to live her own life. Even if it was possible, she wouldn't want Harumi to become her.

“Yes... you're right... I'm sure she does”

Harumi raised her head and smiled. Harumi felt the same way Koutarou did. The Alaia in her mind wouldn't want Harumi to change her life. Even for Alaia, the two overlapping like this was an unanticipated event. But even then, a wish that could not be erased budded within Harumi, as she saw the tears forming in Koutarou's eyes. Most of all, she knew that her feelings and Alaia's were as one.

“But, Satomi-kun... I sometimes think that I should have been the reincarnation of Alaia-sama. That if only I could become Alaia-sama...”

“Sakuraba-senpai, that's...”

“If that really was the case, then even if I was Harumi or Alaia-sama, then my life would be the same”

For the first time, Harumi began wishing from the bottom of her heart to become Alaia. She wanted to let Koutarou and Alaia meet. She also wanted Alaia to meet Koutarou. Being so kind, Harumi couldn't accept that their meeting had ended in a sad farewell. That's why she wanted to give them the kind of days that Alaia fantasized about.

However, the reality of Harumi being Harumi got in the way of that. That was a very obvious thing, but it made Harumi feel unbearably impatient right now.

From the World of Stars

Part 1

Friday, November 19

Two days after departing from the ring around Alaia. Koutarou and the others were approaching the defense system set up around the planet. If they got past this, all that was left was the re-entry. However, there were two barriers in the way. The laser cannons set up as countermeasures for the ice and the air defense system set up by the army.

The laser cannons were practically no problem whatsoever. As they identified targets approaching Alaia with radar, objects below a certain size wouldn't get targeted. They had made preparations for that.

However, the anti air defense system was a different matter. They had camouflaged all of the surface to make it look like a lump of ice, and normally there wouldn't be any problems. As the system was set up to cover a wide area, it would be difficult to detect a single small, camouflaged ship. The primary objective of the anti air defense system was to deal with the space battleships and the fleets that followed, smaller ships that got through could be dealt with later. They didn't need the accuracy to detect a small camouflaged ship, and it would be unrealistic to be that accurate. That said, they couldn't relax. Obviously, patrol ships were about, and if the air system has been updated and they've moved places, they might pass close by one and get detected. As a result, even though they knew they would probably be fine, they had to spend some time uneasy.

“We're less than 3,000 kilometers away”

Peeking at her bracelet, Clan reported the situation to Koutarou and the others who were drinking their tea. Hearing that, Koutarou rested his hand on the table and looked up.

“Even if you say that, it doesn't really click”

“Geez... uhm, in another ten minutes we'll be re-entering the atmosphere”

”That's awfully fast”

“This is the result of having been accelerated by the gravitational pull of Alaia ever since we separated from the Hazy Moon. Everything will proceed in an instant from here on”

“I kinda understand the reason why people never mention distances in sci-fi movies”

“Yes. When moving in space, time is easier to understand than distance”

Fortunately, this anxious time wouldn't last for much longer. Realizing that, Koutarou flashed a smile. Clan felt roughly the same way, and was smiling as well, but her expression was somewhat stiff. Confused by that, Koutarou asked her why.

“What's wrong?”

”I was just thinking about what will happen next...”

Clan had a bitter smile. The scientist within her couldn't accept what would happen next.

“Is there something about what happens next?”

”The method of re-entry is different from the usual one”

”How is it different?”

”Normally, we'd burn up on this kind course”

”What!?”

After entering orbit a normal spaceship would descend slowly to the surface as if they were surfing on the atmosphere. Doing that, the speed and altitude would slowly drop, protecting the hull from the high temperature when entering the atmosphere.

However, O-hime, concealing itself as a lump of ice wasn't using that method. Though the conditions for re-entry are similar, its angle was steep and its speed fast. If they continued on their current path, Koutarou and the others would burn up as they flew across the skies of Alaia as a shooting star.

“Glasses, you mean it's like on anime where they go 'Don't be reckless, the friction in the atmosphere will burn you up!?!’”

Sanae who was clinging onto Koutarou's back and listening to Clan leaned forward in surprise.

“That's the one”

In reality, the heat created from air being compressed was far greater than the heat born from friction, but since there was no point in mentioning that now, Clan omitted it.

“That's bad! Let's run away, Koutarou! At this rate, you'll burn up while calling out the name of your beloved, being me!!”

Sanae shook Koutarou from behind. Thanks to anime, Sanae had an abundance of knowledge of what happened on failed re-entries.

“C-Calm down, S-Sanae!”

“How could I calm doooown!! Nooooooooo, we'll turn into staaaars!!”

“It's okay, Sanae-chan. Uncle will do his best to keep that from happening”

“Eh? R-Really?”

---”Indeed. I will slow us down and block the heat. It wouldn't be funny if the Fire Dragon Emperor burned up after all”

It was Alunaya's job to solve the problems during re-entry. He would erect a sturdy barrier and block the speed while at the same time shaping the barrier in a way that would decelerate the ship. If that wasn't enough, he'd use magic to directly decelerate it. One could say it was a feat possible only for the emperor of the fire dragons.

“My weight will increase so I don't really want too, but I definitely don't want to die”

"... Monster Uncle, how much will Shizuka weigh?"

---"... It's not like I'm transforming, so I don't think she'll even get past 200 kilos"

"So Shizuka will accept that"

---"Indeed. There's no worries as she won't be meeting any acquaintances for a while anyways"

"Relying on magic huh... I see, so that's why you're sulking"

"I can't accept something as ridiculous as this..."

Putting it poorly, they were forcibly using magic to make up for the sloppy re-entry. To Clan who was a disciple of science, it was a method she couldn't accept.

"Let's just say that we're keeping your technology for later, Clan-dono"

"Yeah. Besides, if Clan-san wasn't here, we wouldn't have made it this far this easily"

"Haah... you two are the only ones who would say that, Kii, Harumi"

"You're just a stubborn and eccentric scientist"

"Bertorion!!"

With some dyspathy mixed in, as the group got closer to the goal, they felt worse and worse. Their space cruise was reaching its end.

"Emergency alert Ho-! Detecting active radar!"

"The enemy is approaching Ho-! There forces are four space fighters!"

However, the coup d'etat army wouldn't allow them to descend to Alaia that easily. By chance or by inevitability, the enemy was approaching O-hime.

"What!?"

Hearing the haniwas alert, Theia stood up and ran towards the cockpit. Koutarou and the others followed suit. An enemy encounter just as they were about to attempt re-entry was very bad news.

Koutarou and the others were perplexed by the enemy's sudden appearance,

but so were the pilots of the four fighters. They were surprised that they had come across their enemies.

“Captain, how could this new radar detect the enemy's position?”

“I don't know. It was announced as DKI's new model, but... I can't believe this performance”

“Resolution wise, there are more digits than the ones we used to have”

“When did they develop something like this...? It's not been that long since DKI entered the weapon's business...”

The imperial space fighters that they used originally came equipped with a multisensor that used gravitational waves and radio. The multisensor was used for missions other than just combat, so it had more functions than just tracking the enemy in front of them. However, that was just a device to examine their surroundings. Yet the new model multisensor that was installed just today had detected an enemy with their power off and hiding from several dozen kilometers away. Normally that would be unthinkable. The new multisensor had an unbelievably good performance.

“And why did we know that an unidentified ship was passing through this region?”

“Maybe it's some other new technology, or maybe it was a spy or something...”

Their other doubt was that they were passing by near their enemies. The new multi sensors true performance was a military secret so they hadn't been told, but the display showed an area of about 100 kilometers in diameter. This was an awfully large area, but that was just the senses of someone living on the surface of a planet. In space 100 kilometers wasn't all that much. That could be easily understood as there's roughly 380,000 kilometers between the Earth and the Moon. The distance between Alaia and its ring was roughly the same, so detecting the enemy with even a high performing multisensor would be next to impossible. If they didn't know the route the enemy was coming from to begin with, it would have been impossible, and even if they knew it would be difficult.

“Whatever the case, it's technology that the military would desperately want”

”Now that you mention it, the fleet that went to capture Her Majesty Elfaria returned empty handed”

“That was probably what get them motivated”

The reason they had been able to detect Koutarou and the others was because DKI, or more accurately, Elexis, had gotten his hands on spiritual energy technology and magic.

The multisensor was given the ability to detect spiritual energy and was able to detect the aura of their enemies. Moreover, since this was in space with no other living thing around, it was possible to detect spiritual energy from a much farther distance.

Moreover, Darkness Rainbow used magic to forecast the route. As there were several routes that had a high probability, a squadron of fighters was set out for each of them, all equipped with the new multisensor. Koutarou and the others had ended caught up in one of those webs.

“But I can't imagine they'd offer all of this free of charge. This is on the level of top-secret, or maybe even more than that”

”I see, DKI would earn more from a prolonged fight with the Elfaria faction after all. Then there's the chance that the technology will leak. Normally you'd try to sell a model with less performance”

”Then Captain, does that mean that they've made a deal worth even more than that?”

“Yeah... there doesn't seem to be any doubts, something's going on up at the top”

And these events planted seeds of doubt in the minds of the pilots. The military on Alaia were under Lord Bandarion's and Director-General Granado's control, but the majority of the people stationed there were locals. So while they obeyed orders from their superiors, they began wondering if it was all a mistake somewhere deep down inside. Those feelings were as water and nourishment, slowly making those seeds of doubt bloom.

Part 2

The fighter pilots were misfortunate to not know that they were going up against empress Elfaria and princess Theiamillis themselves. They had only been given the order to attack the unidentified ship trying to enter the atmosphere, and they followed procedures as usual. While they had their doubts, they didn't have any conviction yet. They didn't have any reasons to stop the attack as of yet.

“Your Highness, the coup d'état army fighters are jamming the communications! We don't have access to any communications outwards apart from laser communication!”

The first thing the fighters did was to jam communications. This prevented the use of guided weapons and prevented any calls for backup. As Forthorthe's guided weaponry had tremendous accuracy and speed, jamming was indispensable.

“Curse you, Bandarion..”

Theia was standing by the two layers of doors leading outside, the airlock, and when she heard Ruth's report an angered expression appeared on her face.

“What is it?”

“He is planning on using those unknowing soldiers as sacrifices to lower mine and mother's support!! That's why they jammed us right from the beginning!!”

Jamming was usually after missiles had been launched or messages that might be interpreted as calls for reinforcements had been sent. If not, one would end up jamming any potential surrender messages as well. Since the jamming had gone on straight away, the pilots had been ordered to destroy them right away. That's why Theia believed that Lord Bandarion had made the pilots attack knowing that Theia and the others were here.

With them being jammed, Theia and the others had no choice but to counterattack them as they had already begun re-entry. But if they counterattacked, that would bring about another problem. As the fighters were also being pulled in by gravity, if the pilots were knocked unconscious or their engines were stopped, they would get pulled in by the planet's gravity and die as they entered the atmosphere. Even worse, many of the pilots were locals. Which meant that Lord Bandarion's goal was to either have the pilots kill Elfaria and Theia here, or if that didn't work, at least lower the support of Elfaria and Theia by saying that they had killed local soldiers. If these four fighters were destroyed, Lord Bandarion would surely hold a grand funeral and show how violent Elfaria was.

“Then what do we do?”

“We'll destroy their sensors. Without them, they have no way of fighting”

With jamming, radio and gravitational waves were unusable. That's why there was a need to use optical cameras or thermal sensors, means that are difficult to interfere with, to lock onto the target. The multisensor consisted of many devices mounted on the upper part of the airframe. If they could destroy that, the fighters would only have spare sensors used in case of emergency left, making any further fighting difficult.

“So blind them, huh”

“Yes. But brace yourself. If we damage the airframe itself too much then there's nothing more we can do”

“Let's do it”

“... I'm sorry, Koutarou”

Theia instinctively apologized. Aiming for just the sensors in a high speed space battle was difficult. It only increased the danger, which she felt sorry for.

“Don't worry, I'm good at that kind of thing”

However, Koutarou nonchalantly smiled. Seeing his expression, Theia remembered who Koutarou was. While that was unnecessary for Theia herself, it was necessary for the situation.

“That's right, you're the Blue Knight... Please, my knight”

”As you wish, My Princess”

In the current age, the Blue Knight was respected as the model image of knights, partially because he hadn't killed any enemies intentionally. In other words, this kind of danger was a daily occurrence.

Part 3

As O-hime was re-entering the atmosphere, O-hime and Shizuka couldn't move. So those who could move freely in space would go outside the ship to counterattack the fighters. Those members consisted of Koutarou and Theia, who normally used equipment for space use, Sanae-chan in her spiritual form and Yurika who was forced to wear an improved model of PAF.

“Nooooooo!! I don't want to go into space without a spacesuit!!”

“You're already outside, just give it up”

“You are wearing a spacesuit, you just can't see it. Just believe in Glasses”

“You're acting like it's none of your business!!”

“Ruth, how many minutes do we have left!?”

“Roughly three minutes. Please keep the time left to return to O-hime in mind!”

Koutarou and the other three would leave the ship and protect O-hime from the fighters. As they were already entering the atmosphere, the temperature was starting to rise and there was little time remaining. As Koutarou and the others would get pulled by the gravity as well, if they got too far away from O-hime they wouldn't be able to return, regardless of time. It was a problematic situation to fight in, but they didn't have the time to worry about that. It couldn't be helped that Yurika was crying.

“Yurika, is it really impossible? We brought you with us because magic might be involved, but we could take Aika-san with us instead”

“Uuuh...”

Based on the haniwas detection, it was almost certain that the enemy was using spiritual energy technology. That meant that Elexis was involved, which also meant that magic might be a possibility as well. That was the reason

Koutarou had forcibly brought Yurika with him, he wasn't trying to be mean.

“I'll do it! That's my job!”

After Koutarou's words, Yurika's cries coming from the communicator stopped. He couldn't see her face, but Koutarou knew the kind of expression Yurika showed at a time like that.

“I'm counting on you”

”Yes!”

”Alright... men, begin combat!”

Waiting for Yurika to calm down, Theia shouted out her order, and Koutarou and the others took action. The fighters were now in front of them.

“Sanae!”

“Okay!! Special attack, Galaxy Sanae-channel!!”

The first one to make a move was Sanae. Using her spiritual powers, she connected everyone's minds. This allowed them to communicate without any communicators. Space was wide, and with the jamming in place, they could only communicate in close range. Before their individual battles began they would need to secure a means to communicate.

“And the enemies are over here!”

Sanae had one more important job. That was to use her spiritual powers to track the enemy and ally positions, and let Koutarou and the others know. With that, Koutarou and the others were able to fight without radars and sensors.

“Double Cast – Lightning Reflex, Keen Sense – Modifier – Multiple Target!”

There was one more important problem to be resolved in a space battle. Battles took place at long range, and the speeds were high. So excellent kinetic vision, reflexes and accurate movements were required. As they could only aim by relying on the sensor, they especially needed that. In order to compensate for that, Yurika's magic was needed.

“Then we're off. Theia, I'm counting on you to cover me”

”Got it, fight to your heart's content! Then let's go!”

With Sanae's and Yurika's assistance, Koutarou and Theia flew off. As there was no atmospheric resistance in space, they moved quicker than normal, at a speed equal to the fighters.

“Captain, enemy units approaching! Radar is showing four, but only two on the optics... no, three? Anyways, they are very small targets!”

The coup d'état army noticed Koutarou and the others approaching. As they had a radar using spiritual energy technology, they could detect the enemy even during the jamming.

“I've confirmed it here too!! ... Are the enemy mobile infantry!?”

However, when they confirmed their appearances, they were overcome with surprise. In the current age of Forthorthe, mechanical armored clothes were considered outdated. They were still used to examine places that couldn't be left to machines and when withdrawing from battles, but in other cases, robots of the same size were stronger. That's why it was simply unthinkable for mechanical armor clothes to compare to fighters.

“Are these guys insane!?”

Of course, the fighter pilots questioned their enemies sanity. As it was dark, they couldn't make out their enemies faces, but they couldn't help but want to take a look.

“Captain, they might actually be sane! They're as mobile as we are. While the weaponry of one of them is unknown, the other one seems to have a large-caliber gun for armored targets!”

“I see, so they're riding on a flying cannon huh...”

But as they gathered information on Koutarou and the others, the surprise began changing direction. While small, they had the mobility and attack power of a fighter. It seemed their defense was less in return, but as they were small they were hard to hit, meaning that their actions weren't as reckless as they first seemed. Moreover, being separated from the army, the Elfaria faction would likely weaponize and use everything, but in that sense it wasn't that strange.

“Now isn't the time to be impressed, assume that they're riding fighters and respond to that!”

"Roger that!"

While the fighter pilots were going up against outdated technology, they weren't letting their guard down, and followed procedures to attack. First off was firing missiles from long range.

"All units, spread out after firing missiles. And then individually attack those the ones that weren't defeated by the missiles! I will go on to attack the enemy spaceship!"

The captain's plan of attack focused on certainty over all. First they would attack the mobile infantrymen, Koutarou and Theia, with missiles. If that didn't defeat them, three of the fighters would challenge them to a dogfight. During that time, the captain would attack the enemy's small spaceship, the O-hime. As it wouldn't be that hard to destroy a spaceship in re-entry, he left the majority of the forces to deal with Koutarou and Theia.

---It's not just the multisensor either, these missiles are strange too. Why can they be guided under jamming? And why were they given to us?

The four fighters fired off two missiles each, for a total of eight, all guided using spiritual energy. While the captain didn't know the truth behind them, he knew that they weren't normal. And his doubts for the mission began to grow.

"Koutarou, focus the active barrier to your front and push through the missiles! Don't worry, I will deal with any dangerous missiles!"

"Alright, I'll leave it to you!"

In response to the fired missiles, the strategy Koutarou and Theia chose was to push through the front. Koutarou and Theia were small targets to shoot down with missiles and the relative speed was fast. There was almost no worries of a direct hit, but if they exploded close by, there was a chance of taking damage. So Theia would destroy missiles that could be a threat. It wasn't just because the two loved going straight forward.

"Yurika, Sanae, one of the fighters is headed your way!"

"I'll do my best!"

"Koutarou, it looks like the missile is chasing after auras! I'll try blocking it!"

They had another means of dealing with the missiles. As they were guided using spiritual energy, Sanae could use her spiritual powers to get in the way of the guidance.

“Number one, the super galactic idol, Higashihongan Sanae will sing for your sake!”

What Sanae started was to sing in the middle of space. The song was from an anime she loved, and as she began singing, she literally poured her soul into it.



“So~ mu~ch happe~ns everyda~y♪ Smile~, there are da~ys tha~t are clou~dy as well♪”

It was the theme song of Sanae's beloved anime, Magical Girl Love Love Heart. While her singing was far from any good, spiritual waves spread through space.

“At time~s like tha~t, ca~ll for me~♪ I will deliver Love! Love! Hea~rt magic to~ you~♪”

As she put a lot more soul into it than she needed, her singing voice was surprising persuasive and powerful, despite her ability. And as if their hearts were charmed by the song, the missiles lost sight of Koutarou and Theia. The enemy's radar temporarily seized to function due to the Sanae's high amounts of spiritual energy.

“Good job, Sanae!”

Theia listened to Sanae's singing voice that was still continuing as she squeezed the trigger on her equipped weapons. The combat dress she was equipped with was Star Purple. It was equipment intended for use in space and came equipped with various energy weaponry, starting with lasers.

“Keep it up you two!”

Theia fired off her laser and shot down three missiles in succession. Koutarou's barrier pushed aside the debris left behind by the missiles as he charged forwards. Even as she sang, Koutarou could still tell where the enemy was thanks to Sanae. The enemy on the other hand couldn't use their radar because of Sanae's song, so Koutarou could attack them without worrying about a counterattack. Koutarou came swinging at the fighter right in front of him.

“Sakuraba-senpai, I'm counting on you!”

“Yes! Shine, Signaltin!”

“Uooooooooo!!”

As he passed the fighter, Koutarou swung Signaltin. As the relative speed was fast, the blow had more power than usual.

Covered in powerful magical power, Signaltin's blade shone silver as it easily broke through the enemy's barrier.

“Theia!”

“Leave it to me!”

That was when Theia, coming in slightly later repeatedly fired her beam cannon and destroyed the multisensor installed on the upper part of the fighter's frame. With that, having lost its eyes and ears, the fighter turned around and left the region. Without giving chase, Koutarou and Theia headed for another enemy.

“Number Two has been damaged during the radar whiteout and is leaving the combat region”

”Damnit, is this the enemy's doing!? But at this range!!”

As the fighter's AI reported on an update in the battle, the captain fired the remaining two missiles at O-hime. The radar was still rebooting, but he was now close enough to guide the missile using optics. As the enemy couldn't move because of the re-entry process, that should be enough to destroy it.

“What!?”

However, that was when something unexpected happened again. Just before the missiles hit, the enemy disguised as a lump of ice disappeared like smoke. Because of that, the missiles exploded in empty space and shattered one of the nearby ice lumps.

“Ah, he fell for the fake”

”That was some smart thinking for you”

“Kiriha-san taught me about it”

“What, now I feel like it was waste to feel any kind of admiration”

This was because of Yurika's spell. She prepared a fake O-hime with the same size shape and heat, while making the real one look like an actual lump of ice. The captain had fired his missiles at the fake.

“Damnit, I was tricked! But it's not over yet!”

With the radar restarted, the captain got a lock on O-hime's position. He was out of missiles, but he still had his beam cannon. Not giving up, the captain

charged towards the O-hime to destroy it.

“It's coming to attack again!”

“Stop panicking and protect the ship!”

”Y-Yes!”

With the captain locking onto the O-hime with the optics, there was no more point in Sanae's singing. So Sanae and Yurika would work together to protect O-hime. Using her spiritual powers, Sanae pulled out lumps of ice to use as a shield, while Yurika created an energy shield with magic.

“Eei, one after another!”

The captain rapidly fired his beam cannon as he passed by the O-hime. However, the beams were all stopped by the lumps of ice and the magical shield and didn't reach O-hime. But it wasn't like the beams were ineffective as they shattered the lumps of ice and the magical shield blinked and disappeared. Feeling a good response from his attack, the captain turned his fighter around to go for another attack.

“Theia, I can handle this! You go over there!”

”Sorry, I'll leave it to you!”

By that time, Koutarou and Theia had destroyed the weapons and sensors on the second fighter. With only one fighter left, it could be dealt with by one of them. And since Theia had more mobility and a longer range, she was more suited to be sent to help Yurika and Sanae.

“That's a good decision, but I'm faster!”

However, before Theia could arrive to back them up, the captain had turned his fighter around and was starting his second attack run. Theia had her laser bombardment but because she was too far away, it didn't work well to restrain the fighter as it rapidly fired its beams again.

“Kyaaaa, it's coming again!!”

“It's not the same as beforeeee!!”

Yurika cast her defensive spell again, and Sanae gathered more lumps of ice,

but this time she used them differently. She read the captain's intentions of attack and threw the lumps of ice in the line of fire.

“You can do that!?”

Surprised by an impossible counterattack, the captain decided to focus his attack on the lumps of ice. If he evaded, Theia would make it back before the next attack. So he would rather shatter the lumps of ice and attack the O-hime one more time before Theia arrives. However, that idea backfired.

“Oh no!?”

While the beam cannon had shattered the lumps of ice, it didn't cause an explosion like missiles, and as a result, the lumps of ice shattered into smaller ice shards, and the fighter flew into the shards at full speed.

Part 4

The captain of the fighter squadron had only been unconscious for a few seconds. The loud alarm and shaking from the fighter crashing into ice shards quickly woke him up.

“J-Just what...”

Having just come to, his mind was still muddled. The alarm was noisy and the airframe was shaking, and red light was coming in from outside. But as he was still waking up, he believed he should resolve the reason for the alarm blaring for the time being.

“... What an awful state...”

The captain shook his head and confirmed the state of his fighter according to the trained in procedures as he tried to clear up his mind. The space distortion field was defective, half of the posture control thrusters were no longer functioning, the temperature of the airframe was rising, he would need to adjust the angle of re-entry. Even limiting the problems to the major ones, that many abnormalities were being reported. Pretty much every abnormality a pilot wouldn't want to encounter in flight had occurred.

“... That's right, I was on a mission, attacking a suspicious ship...”

As he was going through the procedures as usual, he began understanding the situation he was in.

During a mission where he was attacking a suspicious ship suspected to be part of the Elfaria faction he had misjudged the situation and charged into shards of ice. The results of that was the current situation. He had lost control of his ship and was headed straight into the atmosphere. The shaking and light was because of that.

“... It looks like this is it...”

He was on a multipurpose ship that was used for all kinds of missions, and it was capable of re-entry, but that was just when entering at the correct angle and speed.

But now those conditions were not satisfied. The speed was practically no problem, but the angle and posture were hopeless. He was upside down and entering at an acute angle. He of course tried to escape his predicament, but with roughly half of the posture control thrusters not functioning, he found himself unable to change posture. Even if he wanted to use the distortion field to protect himself against the heat, it had run into an error while it was rebooting and was stuck in a loop of rebooting itself. While the fighter hadn't been destroyed, the damage taken from the ice shards was far from small.

That's why the captain realized he was about to die. No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't find any way to survive. He would surely burn up together with his fighter.

“... Faluna, Eswiz, I'm sorry for not returning home”

Having made his resolve, the captain said his farewells to his wife and child. The truth was that he was unbearably scared, and he wanted to scream out that he didn't want to die. However, the cockpit's flight recorder would record his final moments which would surely be shown to his wife and child. When he thought of that, he held back his fear and spoke to those he would leave behind. If he were to cry out in terror, his words of farewell wouldn't reach them. The captain somehow managed to contain his feelings that were on the verge of exploding and left his final message to his wife and child.

“But I am someone who has sworn loyalty to the royal family. So this might be for the better for the empress' sake. I don't know who is onboard that ship, but based on how they fight, it must be someone important”

And in order to convince himself, he told himself that this was fine. It was a mysterious mission from the start. The multisensor and missiles, the enemy's strength and equipment and even their means of attack were all strange. From all of that, one could easily imagine that someone important on the Elfaria faction was onboard the ship. And that person surviving would surely help empress Elfaria. He was a Alaian local so while he obeyed his orders there were

still parts that he couldn't accept. In that meaning, this end wasn't all that bad. He wouldn't have to do any harm to Elfaria and the Mastir family. As he thought like that, he was somewhat able to accept dying.



“No, that's not true!”

That was when a voice came from his communicator. That surprised the captain a great deal. In his current situation, communication shouldn't be possible. Yet that voice was awfully clear. At first he thought it was an auditory hallucination.

“Regardless of who mother and I are, we wouldn't want our citizens to die!”

“A contact communication!? That voice couldn't be—”

“You won't die! You will survive and return to your family! And you will live your life out to its fullest!”

“—Princess!? Princess Theiamillis!?”

As the captain realized who the voice belonged to, his fighter began changing inclination. As it did, he could see the glimpse of a person through the canopy on his cockpit. The owner of the voice was holding onto his fighter and trying to correct his posture.

“Yes! You can rest easy, just endure it for a while longer!”

“Stop it, Your Highness! If you do that, you will die!”

And when he realized, he worried for the life of Her Highness, for the life of Theia. He hadn't given up his loyalties to the Mastir family. Capabilities of the combat dress that Theia was wearing aside, it wasn't equipped for atmospheric re-entry. The captain could tell just by looking at her. At this rate even if she were to save the captain's fighter, she would burn up instead. That was something that the captain couldn't accept.

“I won't die! I'm a proud descendant of the Mastir family! I'm not weak enough to lose my life over something like this!”

“But!!”

“Silence! Even if it's as you say, I won't abandon anyone! If I did, there wouldn't be any point in returning to this country!!”

“... Your Highness... you... really are...”

Theia didn't listen to what the captain had to say as she used Star Purple's

large thrusters to adjust the fighter's posture. Just like the fighter, Theia's combat dress was giving out various warnings. There was little propellant left, the barrier against high temperatures was on the brink of collapsing, her falling speed was too great and she wouldn't be able to return to O-hime. But even then, Theia continued pushing the fighter. Because protecting her citizens was her conviction as a princess.

“You don't have to worry about me, you just live! As long as you are a subject of Mastir, you have to be happy!!”

“Your Highness!! Your Highness!!”

Thanks to Theia's efforts, several of the alarms on the fighter stopped. That meant that the posture and angle were now at acceptable levels. Having confirmed that, the captain hurriedly called out to Theia.

“Your Highness, the posture and angle are back to normal! Hurry up and withdraw”

However, before he could finish his sentence, he could see Theia lose to the pressure of the atmosphere and get thrown away. Seeing that happen before his very eyes, the captain let out a scream.

“Your highneesss!!”

But no matter how loudly he yelled, there was no response from Theia. But her expression as they parted was something that reached the captain's very core.

“YOUR HIGHNEESS!!”

Theia was smiling. She looked very glad. Even as she was exposed to the intense heat and pressure of the atmospheric re-entry, she didn't look like she regretted her decisions in the slightest. It was a very refreshing smile, and the captain would never forget it for the rest of his life.

Part 5

Theia had said to that captain that she would be fine, but she didn't actually have any plans to survive. She had no choice but to say that in the situation.

“... How troubling, at this rate I really will die...”

Theia felt like she had done something stupid, but it wasn't something she regretted. As member of the royal family of Forthorthe, she simply couldn't stand by idly as a citizen died before her eyes.

“... About another 20 or 30 seconds I guess...”

Theia had used up almost all of her propellant to change the fighter's posture and inclination. So she released Star Purple which was now nothing more than a lump of metals and used it as a shield to protect her from the heat of re-entry. However, Star Purple couldn't withstand that heat and began breaking down starting from its weakest points. There was not much time left. If Star Purple broke, all that was left to protect Theia was the barrier that was on the verge of collapse. She would surely burn up in an instant.

“So I'll go out like a shooting star huh... an unexpectedly romantic end”

There was countless variations to how one could die. In Theia's mind, going out like a shooting star really stimulated the romanticist within her, and it was an especially beautiful end. Moreover, the view was good. Alaia extending before her eyes was covered in a beautiful blue glow. Being all out of options, Theia stared at the planet and waited for the time to come.

Thud.

“Ow!?”

That was when Theia felt a big impact on the back of her head. At first she thought her barrier might have collapsed, but that wasn't the case.

“What are you acting cool for on your own...”

"Koutarou!?"

Before she knew it, Koutarou was beside her. She suspected that he might be an illusion, but she quickly realized that it wasn't the case. The back of Theia's head was still throbbing in pain after all.

"What are you doing!? Are you trying to kill yourself!?"

"That's my line. Just what are you doing?"

"Protecting the citizens is the duty of the royal family!"

"Then you don't mind do you?"

"Hm?"

"Protecting the royal family is the duty of the knights"

Koutarou embraced Theia as he spoke. The next moment, Star Purple that was shielding the two broke, and the heat that it had been blocking assaulted them at full force. However, the two didn't burn up. The barrier on Koutarou's armor blocked the heat. Thanks to GOL, Koutarou's armor could put up two types of barriers. A barrier that protected him from all around, and another, more sturdy barrier that protected him from a certain direction. These two types of barriers just barely protected the two.

"I mind"

Theia embraced Koutarou back and frowned a little. Theia was greatly dissatisfied with what Koutarou had to say.

"What?"

"Why won't you say it's because I'm important to you!?"

"Of course a knight would value his princess"

"Kuh, are you saying that, despite knowing what I mean!?"

Theia pushed away from Koutarou a little and glared at him with puffed up cheeks. Her expression was far different from the princess-like one from just a moment ago, and she looked more like a sulking child. Seeing that, Koutarou started laughing.

"It's a little bit of punishment"

“Stupid, why would you be so mean at an important moment like this! It's our final goodbye!!”

The atmosphere isn't so easy that it can be breached with just GOL's barriers. In fact, Koutarou's barriers were reaching their limit and were starting to sound off warnings. That's why Theia believed the two of them would die like this.

“It's not really the end after all”

”Eh”?

Theia's eyes opened wide and she lost all momentum upon hearing Koutarou's words.

“I've brought Yurika with me”

Koutarou indicated overhead as he held Theia, still overcome by blank surprise. As Theia looked up, she saw something strange flying there.

“Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaa, Noooooooooooooooooo!! I'm burning, I'm burning uuuup!!”

That strange thing being Yurika straddled on a broom. She cried out as the heat hit her defensive spell while at the same time flying towards Koutarou and Theia. Her voice couldn't be heard, but Theia could tell what Yurika was saying just by looking at her expression.

“Let Yurika in”

”As you wish, My Lord”

The armor's AI opened a hole in the upper part of the barrier for just a moment as Yurika removed her spell and entered. And just as she arrived, Yurika began complaining to Koutarou.

“W-W-What is with this hellish place, Satomi-san!?”

”We covered it in physics the other day. It's the upper layer of the atmosphere”

“You're lying, this is the first time I've heard of it! I'll die, I'll die, I'm dying!!”

“We're all working together to keep that from happening”



“I see, so that's what you meant”

Theia now understood Koutarou's intentions. Koutarou's armor alone wouldn't be enough to pass through the atmosphere. But it might be possible if Yurika's spell was included. And if the two bought enough time, the barrier of Theia's combat dress would recover, letting her help out as well. The truth was that the ideal would be to add in Sanae's spiritual powers as well, but she was required to help move O-hime, so she wasn't available. But with the three of them, the chance for survival was not all that small.

“But Koutarou. There's one big problem”

“A big problem? What are you talking about? Is there a problem with the dress?”

“I'm still sulking”

Theia puffed up her cheeks again. Seeing her expression, Koutarou gave up and smiled wryly. He was no match against Theia when she was like this. Besides, there was no guarantee that they would survive even with the three of them working together.

“... Theia, you're important to me, that's why I came to save you”

“I see, then it can't be helped. I'll let you save me”

“Stupid”

“Fufufu”

Theia happily smiled and embraced Koutarou who was looking away in embarrassment. With that, there were no problems left. All that was left was for the three of them to give it their all so they could return alive.

“Noooooooooooooooooooo~!”

And as they trailed a long blue tail and Yurika's long scream, they screamed through the skies of Alaia like a meteor.

Part 6

On the night a lone glowing blue shooting star appeared on the sky. A young boy living on Alaia received a letter. It was from his friends that he hadn't seen in awhile.

“Uhm... 'I am riding on a spaceship, everyone is okay'”

The boy laid on his bed and began reading the letter from his friends. Both the writer and the reader were young children. As a result, the content was monotonous and direct to the point, and partly because of the faltering voice reading it out, it sounded horribly tedious. But having received a letter from his friends he hadn't seen in awhile, the boy was happy.

“'We met the Blue Knight and a state secret was flying'... the Blue Knight?’”

As he read the letter, the boy came across a couple of interesting words. It was the name that no boy or girl on Forthorthe could ignore. It was the name of the legendary hero they would see on TV shows or hear about in the fairy tales.

“'There is a video of the Blue Knight in the letter, please look at it. From Bobban Giun'... is this the video?’”

The boy shook the envelope upside down and a small plastic piece came falling out. It was a commonly used media for recordings, and in it was a lot of footage named 'Blue Knight found'.

“'Show it to everyone else and they will be happy' ... hmm, I don't get it. Anyways maybe I should look?’”

After surprising the boy, the footage was uploaded to the network connecting all of Forthorthe. They didn't know what kind of outcome that would have. All the boy that had recorded the footage and the boy that uploaded it were thinking about was that everyone would rejoice.

Afterword

Long time no see, it's the author Takehaya. This time Volume 21 has been safely delivered. As the Golden Princess and the Blue Knight is written on the cover, this volume is centered around Theia. But while she is the center, the story is not only about her. As all fates are gathering, everyone should have their chance to shine. As a result, this story should be the largest scale one yet. I will do my best to not betray your hopes.

As for the contents of this volume, it is a story about leaving Earth and heading for Forthorthe's solar system. As the stage is set in space, the type of story is different from usual. As Forthorthe is over 10 million light-years away from Earth, just getting there is an adventure.

The highlight this time is Theia. I wanted to make Theia stand out this volume. This time around, Theia covers all the bases from comedic elements, to combat to serious politics, and two new sets for her combat dress, Guardian Yellow and Star Purple make their appearance. I hope the story is satisfying for the Theia fans out there.

When talking about Theia, this time it was determined that she can get married to an Earthling in the true sense of the word. The genetic makeup between Earthlings and Forthorthians are close enough for that. Like Clan and Kiriha say in the volume, this is something normally impossible. That's why that feeling of impossibility most people probably felt during the first volume when a ghost, a magical girl, an underground person and two aliens appeared was correct. Something like that wouldn't happen without reason. But for some reason many readers didn't really push on this matter too much. The preconception that a lot of strange girls suddenly appearing is a common element in light novels might have gotten in the way of any deep thoughts. Depending on the circumstances, the story might never have progressed this far, so that part really helped. That's right, pursuing that topic would have been

pretty dangerous for me (lol).

Another highlight would be the appearances Lord Bandarion and Director-General Granado, who look just like Maxfern and Grevanas. As Elexis looks just like Dextro, many might have expected this development. These men staged a coup d'état in an attempt to acquire Forthorthe. The situation is developing into that of 2,000 years ago. Will Koutarou be able to truly settle the score from 2,000 years ago on Forthorthe. I hope you will enjoy reading more about that.

That's right, as the story is set on the travel to Forthorthe I need to clear up how hyperspace travel over extremely long distances is done. Space is bent to create a shortcut through space-time distortion, it's a so called warp navigation being used. However, that brings about a large technical problem.

There is about 10 million light-years between Earth and Forthorthe. That is a 1 followed by seven 0's. And one light-year is about 10 trillion kilometers. A trillion is a 1 followed by 13 0's. Therefore, 10 million light-years is a 1 followed by 20 0's. In other words, it would look like this.

10 million light-years = 100,000,000,000,000,000,000 kilometers

As this would make it obvious, even a slight miscalculation would give way to a massive error of margin. If we add up any inaccuracies with the observation equipment and warp drive, and we get an error of 0,01%, that error of margin is about 1000 light-years. Even if one were to aim from Earth to a certain solar system, they could end up in a completely unrelated solar system.

As a result, it's unreasonable to assume that one could arrive after a single warp. It's more natural to assume that warps would be used repeatedly. If one were to pick up from the last warp, that would leave an error of margin of 0,1 light-years. That is about 1 trillion. The next warp would then have an error of margin of about 10,000 kilometers, and from there, normal navigation wouldn't be a problem. In other words, with an inaccuracy of 0.01% at least three warps are required.

However, that number completely disregards any safety measures. As you won't know where you end up when exiting warp, some kind of countermeasure will be required. You wouldn't want to end up inside of a star, or get sucked up in a black hole or end up flying through a swarm of comets. In order to counteract

that one would need to end up in areas that are considered safe. In other words, a space wider than the error of margin would allow for safe travels. Fortunately, there are countless such areas in space. But even then one would need to take things in a roundabout way and warps would require a lot more than three jumps.

On top of that, one needs to take into consideration how much time it will take between warps. I imagine warp drives would be delicate machinery so it would require cooling, maintenance, energy recharging and more, and I believe it would take quite some time. A car is ready to go again after being refueled, but I believe a spaceship would only be able to warp once or twice a day. Well, I suspect they would be used without care in the case of an emergency though.

With that in mind, I decided that it would take about ten days for Theia's Blue Knight to get from Earth to Forthorthe. With that as my basis, I decided that a normal space battleship would take about 15 days and a civilian ship would take about 30.

As the details were decided as such, most of the distance when warping is covered in the first warp. And from that, the speed of space travel in Forthorthe isn't expressed as distance but time. More specifically, how many warps it takes to reach the destination. As the Blue Knight heads to Forthorthe, it takes ten warps, meaning it's a ten day long journey. When I think about that, I'm reminded that travelling through space must be very problematic.

As it seems I'm allowed to go on with the afterword for a while longer, I'll do just that. It seems like because of a technical problem, the total numbers in a pocket book increase by 16 pages, and this volume's manuscript seems to have ended immediately after an increase. That's why the remaining pages have been filled up with an afterword and advertisement (lol).

Now let's talk about the next volume a little. Koutarou and the others have arrived at the Forthorthe solar system, but Koutarou, Theia and Yurika have fallen to the surface of the sixth planet from the sun, Alaia, and the place they've fallen to is bad, as it's a region where the coup d'état army has a lot of influence. So the three, hoping to group up with the others, they aim for the Pardomshiha territory that should have a lot of supporters.

That's right, it's something that seems familiar but slightly different. From that point, the development will continue like that. And that's why the past Fortorth the arc ended so quickly. It's because I'll do it properly here. For the time being, look forward to the next volume featuring the adventure of the Blue Knight, the princess and the horse's rear.

That's right, I forgot to report on something important. In this volume, there's a drama CD added as a bonus in the book version, but not in the digital version. However, this time BOOK☆WALKER have extracted the sound data from the data CD and added it as a bonus to the digital version. For the time being, this volume comes with the first half of volume 7.5's drama CD. As the drama CD is only offered for a limited time, those interested should hurry.

It is limited because this is a very experimental attempt. It seems this is the first time BOOK☆WALKER attaches a drama CD's sound data to a digital version. In fact this might be a first for e-books as a whole. As a result, unable to read the demand, and for various adult reasons, they've reached the conclusion that enabling downloads from the start would be hard. So instead, they would enable it for about a month and check the response.

So it will be decided how they will distribute the following drama CD's based on the results. As I'm writing this afterword in the end of November, I can't actually tell you what will happen. Based on the situation, the limited distribution might not last for one month exactly. By the time this book is published, more detailed information should be found on HJ Bunko's and BOOK☆WALKER's websites.

But still, I am greatly helped by BOOK☆WALKER's backup. With not just the drama CD this time around, but the last time they tried selling Empress Alaia goods for the first time through the digital version. This kind of thing might happen again, so those interested please keep a look out.

Alright, this should cover enough pages (lol) so this time I will end my afterword here.

As always, I would like to give my thanks to editorial department for their help, to my illustrator Poco-san who manages to make illustrations even with my various designations, and finally the readers who are always cheering for me.

Then let us meet again in the afterword for volume 22.

November, 2015 Takehaya

Translator's Notes and References